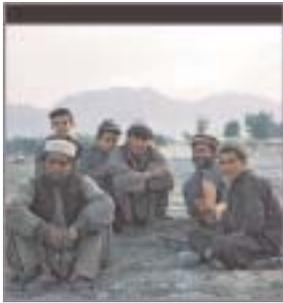
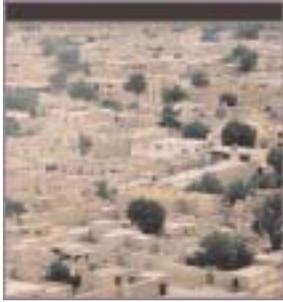
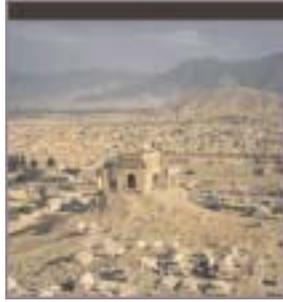
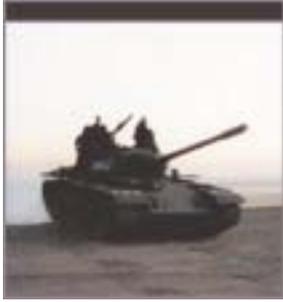


**Reporting
the Future:
A handbook
for Afghan
journalists**



**Institute for
War & Peace
Reporting**



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Index

Introduction - Why this book?	2
The Theory of Journalism	
1.1 Why are you a journalist?	3
1.2 International Journalism	7
1.3 Human Rights and Journalism	9
1.4 House Styles	13
The Practise of Journalism	
2.1 Journalism Safety	16
2.2 Sourcing in Stories	22
2.3 Story Structure	26
2.4 Use of Detail	32
2.5 Quotations	34
2.6 Story Selection	36
2.7 Economic Journalism	40
Reference	
3.1 Information Sources in Kabul	44
3.2 Economic and Development Glossary	46
Answers Section	56

Introduction - Why this book?

“Our belief is a free and strong media can help prevent wars, and put countries broken by war back together again”

“In Afghanistan there has never been a more important time to be a journalist”

The Institute for War & Peace Reporting, IWPR, has been involved with Afghanistan since before the fall of the Taliban government and on the ground since November 2001. We have collaborated on producing stories with scores of journalists and taught the basics of journalism to hundreds more in Kabul and around the country in Mazaar-e Sharif, Qandahar, Herat, Bamiyan, Taloqan and Faizabad.

Begun in 1991, IWPR is active in 20 countries in the Balkans, the Caucasus and Central Asia. Our belief is that strong and free journalism is an essential building block both to rebuild any society torn apart by war, and to prevent conflict breaking out again. History has shown time and again that irresponsible leaders have managed to plunge their countries into war when they have not been accountable to their own people through a free and independent media.

The Handbook for Afghan Journalists is designed to help Afghan journalists in three ways. First, it serves as an explanation in their own language to many of the ideas and concepts behind international journalism. Second, it provides practical guidance on many of the basic techniques of journalism. To this end there are 12 exercises in the book. Some of them have answers provided at the end, and others either have no correct answers or are designed to be worked on in the classroom with a teacher.

Third, the glossary at the back is intended to serve as a reference to explain and introduce many concepts which may be new to Afghan journalists. A wider range of reporting on economic and humanitarian issues is essential to strong public debate - and good government and international community strategies - if Afghanistan's bid for peace and development is to succeed. Journalists need familiarity with basic concepts in these fields to report on them properly.

In Afghanistan there has never been a more important time to be a journalist. For the first time in a generation, journalists have the chance to report freely on what is happening in their country. How they establish standards and quality in their profession over these months and years will set the scene of the information landscape for the next generation.

1.1 Why are you a journalist?

“The goal of serving society does not explain why you might specifically want to become a journalist”

First, know yourself. If you are reading this book, it is either because you are already a journalist, or you have some interest in the profession. During our teaching seminars at IWPR, we have discussed with hundreds of people around the world why they became journalists. Everyone is different, of course, but



Many students of journalism say their aim is to serve society

certain themes occur again and again in these conversations. Here we describe some of the main reasons people become journalists. Then there is an exercise at the bottom where you can analyse your own reasons.

Serve society

Many people say they want to become journalists to serve society. It is true that good journalism does serve society in a number of ways. But many other professions also do that: doctors and teachers, for example. The goal of serving society does not explain why you might specifically want to become a journalist.

Convey Afghanistan's problems to the world

This is one possible reason to become a journalist. But you would have to be working in an international news organisation to do this. You should also be aware of what in the West is called "compassion fatigue". People in Europe and America see so many stories and images of poverty and war from around the world that they cannot cope with it, and eventually these stories cease to have any impact. If you want to tell the rest of the world about Afghanistan, maybe you should think not just in terms of its problems, but also in terms of stories which will interest and entertain international readers.

“Journalism has the power to shame and embarrass public leaders when they fall short of expected standards”

Convey Afghanistan's problems to people in power

Journalism in many countries serves the purpose of informing those in power of what's really going on in the country. Even with the best of intentions, politicians get isolated from real conditions, and surrounded by people who are anxious to please them and so say what they think they want to hear. Journalism is a valuable direct channel to them.

Be a watchdog on power

Journalism should also work the other way round. In free societies, people must have access to information about what their political leaders are doing. Is government policy correct? Is a particular leader honest, and fair? Why has a roads project not gone ahead as planned? What political alliances are working behind the scenes? Ultimately, it is this information which helps people decide which party or leader they vote for in elections. But even before elections, journalism has the power to shame and embarrass public leaders when they fall short of expected standards.

Convey Afghanistan's problems to the Afghan people

A strong reason. An informed public is a cornerstone in building civil society. Hard-hitting journalism about the issues that matter to people can help to create public pressure for change.



Journalists can help Afghans to find out what is going on all over the country

Learn about the rest of the world

Many people become journalists because of a personal interest in finding out about the rest of the world. Being a journalist exposes you to the international environment. Even if you are working in local media, you need to know how your country is related to its neighbours and the rest of the international community.

“Curiosity is one of the best reasons to be a journalist - you will never be disappointed”

“Many people become journalists because they love adventure”

Learn about what's going on in Afghanistan

Many journalists start out in the profession simply because they are curious. They want to understand the world around them. This is one of the best reasons you can have because then journalism will always be personally interesting and entertaining to you, and you will do your job better.

Influence

Journalists exercise a lot of influence in many countries. This is definitely one reason to become a journalist. But the danger is, if you are attracted by power or influence, you will lose your objectivity and impartiality and end up being too closely associated with political leaders.



Journalists get to see more of their own country than most ordinary people do

Fame

Some journalists want to become famous. It is possible to do this through journalism, and it may be an incentive to excelling in your profession.

Money

Although journalism is a paid profession, it is not very highly paid. If you need money, you would be better off looking at almost any other profession. Why not become a businessman instead? But you should be honest about your money needs, because if you are not, you could find yourself in a position where you feel you have to accept dishonest payments and gifts in order to make ends meet.

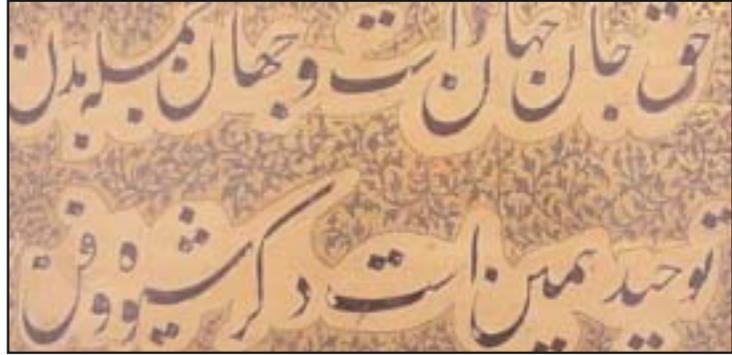
Adventure

Many people become journalists because they love adventure and the feeling when they wake up in the morning that they are not sure what they will be doing that day at their work - the feeling that there is always

Exercise 1: Your reasons for becoming a journalist

The purpose of this exercise is to get you to consider your own motivations for becoming a journalist. There are ten possible reasons listed below: you have ten "personal points" which you must allocate to the different reasons according to how much importance they hold for you. Everyone is different so there is no right answer to this exercise, but we have included two possible answers and explain what they mean in the Answers Section at the back of the book.

Reason	Person A	Person B	You
Convey Afghan problems to the world	4		?
Convey Afghan problems to Afghan leaders	1	2	?
Convey Afghan problems to the Afghan people	1	2	?
Watchdog on power		2	?
Learn about the rest of the world	2		?
Learn about Afghanistan			?
Influence		1	?
Fame		1	?
Adventure	2		?
Love of writing		2	?
Total	10	10	10



In journalism, writing is a tool, not an end of its own

something new. Like the related reasons of being curious and wanting to find out about the world around you, this is one of the best reasons to be a journalist, because that is the essence of the profession, and you should find a high degree of personal satisfaction.

Love of writing

Many journalists love writing. But you should recognise that journalism and writing are not the same thing. Writing is a very important tool in journalism, but it is only one tool among many. As well as writing, which is the skill of presenting information, you must know how to find out information by talking to people, how to cultivate personal contacts, and how to evaluate information once you have got it - who is reliable, who is not, how two conflicting accounts of the same event can be reconciled. If you like writing too much, it may become an obstacle in the way of your reporting skills. Also, writing news is quite specific, and different to other kinds of writing, as we discuss later in this book. If you are only interested in writing, you should not become a journalist.

1.2 International Journalism

Various attempts have been made by journalists' unions around the world to codify journalistic ethics; there are lots of differences, but they are often differences in stress (differences in degree, not kind).

- Warnings against incitement and discrimination feature high in the Press Code for Bosnian Journalists
- Impartiality and accuracy are the top items in the BBC Producers' Guidelines
- The Japan Newspaper Publishers and Editors Association's Canon of Journalism pledges newspapers to "continued effort toward an affluent and peaceful future"
- The Association of Journalists of Kyrgyzstan have a rather nice start to their Code of Ethics: "The journalist's duty is to serve the truth. The role of mass media is to look for the truth."

What international journalism is not

The codes find it easy to agree on what is wrong:

- libel/slander (defamation)
- plagiarism
- accepting bribes

Three key elements

Nearly every code of journalism ethics around the world agrees on three factors being fundamental to the practise of journalism: impartiality, accuracy and fairness. These three factors can be considered universal standards of international journalism.

Impartiality

Most journalists' codes of conduct and rules highlight "impartiality" or "independence" in some way. Impartiality can be a difficult thing to define.

There is political impartiality, which means not supporting one political group over another. In many countries like Afghanistan, publications find it hard to survive without some financial support, and political parties and interest groups are the natural candidates to support newspapers. In such cases the publication should at least publish all details of its financial support, so readers can make their own judgements about its impartiality.

“You should identify yourself as a journalist and use no pressure to get information”

In the West many publications are owned by large companies, and the issue of commercial impartiality is also sensitive. If a newspaper suppresses a story which embarrasses the owners of the company, for example, or which would discourage other companies from advertising in the publication, then it is not being commercially impartial.

Accuracy

Every journalists' code around the world stresses accuracy; the urge to "get it right" is always strong. Journalists need to take extensive notes and tape record interviews when possible to be sure that what they report is as precise as possible. Accuracy seems like a simple concept, but dedication to this internationally recognised principle is also what keeps journalists working overtime. Accuracy requires meticulous attention to detail.

Fairness

Fairness to interviewees. The BBC's Producers' Guidelines say interviewees have a right to know what the programme will be about, what kind of contribution they are expected to make, whether an interview will be live or recorded, whether it will be edited. It also says an interviewer can be sceptical and searching but not discourteous.



Fairness means accurately reporting what they say, whether you agree with them or not.

Fairness in obtaining information: the International Federation of Journalists says: "The journalist shall only use fair methods to obtain news, photographs and documents." At a minimum, this should mean in normal circumstances identifying yourself as a journalist and not being associated with any threat or display of force to obtain information.

Protection of sources

Many journalists' codes of ethics emphasise the journalist's obligation to protect his or her sources. Often, governments and other authorities will demand a journalist reveal the source of a report; in fact, most countries do not guarantee a journalist's right to protect their sources, and occasionally in the United States and Australia, journalists have gone to prison over these issues. At IWPR, we certainly consider it a journalist's right, but it's hard to make the case that it is an international standard.

1.3 Human Rights and Journalism

“Journalism is closely linked to human rights”

Journalism is inextricably linked to issues of human rights in two ways. First, journalists often get into positions where they are witnesses to human rights abuses. If you see mistreatment of prisoners, illegal executions or massacres during fighting, you are in a position to denounce those violations, and to document them in a way which makes it possible for action to be taken later by international legal authorities. This role is especially important now that the International Criminal Court has come into existence.

The second way involves self-defence. Journalists do not receive special treatment, but human rights conventions allow them to maintain civilian status in the middle of conflict. The conventions can also help in securing a journalist's release if they are held by anyone in a conflict.

History of human rights

Human rights have evolved slowly as a concept over centuries. In the West seminal years were 1215, when the King of England was forced to sign the Magna Carta declaring his intention to obey the law like anyone else; 1776, when the American Declaration of Independence enshrined key rights in the constitution of the new country; and 1890, when the Brussels conference outlawed slavery among participating European countries.



Islam guaranteed basic human rights over 1400 years ago

“There is widespread respect in Islam for basic human rights”

In the East Islam is widely seen as providing a foundation for human rights. Islamic Law mentions various rights and duties in the way that humans must behave to one another. The Muslim world's largest international body, the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, held a meeting in support of human rights in Islam in 1990 and declared: "Human beings are born free, and no one has the right to enslave, humiliate, oppress or exploit them, and there can be no subjugation but to Allah the Almighty."

The human rights movement has been growing fast in recent years. The world's first trials for crimes against humanity took place in Nuremberg in 1946 after the Second World War, when 13 Nazi political and military leaders were sentenced to death for their part in atrocities against civilians under their regime. In 1948, the United Nations established the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a document which enshrined basic human rights as a necessary condition of a country which seeks to be part of the modern international community. In the last decade, the United Nations has started to appoint an official Commissioner for Human Rights, and tribunals have been established to deal with the genocide of Rwandan Tutsis in 1994, and to deal with war crimes in the former Yugoslavia.



The International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia at the Hague in the Netherlands is now trying a couple of dozen leaders from all three sides in the war in the former Yugoslavia, including the former president of Yugoslavia, Slobodan Milosevic.

Former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic, on trial at the Hague for alleged crimes committed during wars when he was in power

Most countries in the world have just agreed terms to set up an International Criminal Court, which will try people accused of genocide and crimes of a similar gravity. There is a growing international movement to say that whoever is guilty of war crimes will have to face trial in the future.

“You need to be even more careful when reporting about human rights”

Overall approach

To some extent, reporting on human rights is just the same as reporting on anything else. But because of the greater danger and sensitivity, you need to be even more careful.

When reporting on human rights violations, don't view an issue as a national grievance. In many conflict situations, both or all sides commit human rights violations and you may simply have access to a violation against one group. If you are really committed as a journalist, you should be prepared to report any human rights violations by any group against any group. The underlying principle of human rights is universality: everyone is entitled to protection of life and freedom from

abuse, regardless of race, religion or gender.

Make sure you get the maximum amount of evidence possible. Ask everything several times to check all your answers. Take video footage if you can, or sound recordings, and be careful: if you are at the scene of a human rights violation, not to disturb the evidence.

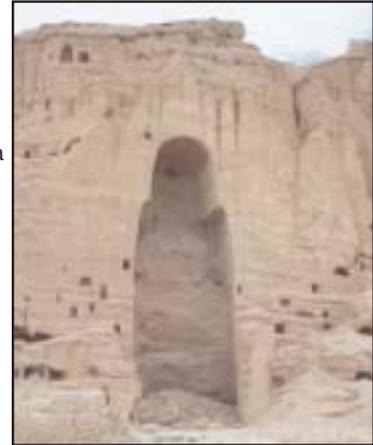
Often in conflict situations, human rights is a banner that opposition groups will raise against the government or dominant power in a region. As such, you run a risk as a journalist of being identified with the opposition. You should be aware of this, and try to distinguish between human rights which are tied to international conventions and the United Nations, of which Afghanistan is a member, and any individual group, particularly if they are associated with a local political force.

You should be cautious in accepting claims about human rights abuses. The bigger the charge or allegation, the more caution you should exercise. Also, be aware of the sensitivities of trying to find out information in a charged atmosphere between two peoples. For example, it may not be easy for a Tajik reporter to investigate human rights allegations in a village near Qandahar, or for a Pashtoon reporter to investigate in the Panjshir Valley. Sometimes, there will be gender issues involved. If allegations involve abuse of women, it would be more sensitive for a female reporter to conduct interviews.

Be aware that while you may be able to leave a region, many of the people you are talking to cannot, and this has an impact on how willing they are to talk.

Interviewing victims and witnesses

· Interview each person alone. There is often a bustle, and with a lot of voices, it is difficult to record. Also, group pressure can easily change (escalate) a story. Even if the person is hesitant, insist on interviewing them alone.



The destruction of the Buddha statues at Bamyan: International humanitarian law also covers global cultural heritage

“Human rights issues are often exploited by rebel groups in conflicts”

*“Ask repeatedly
about the timing
and sequence of
events”*

· Clearly identify yourself as press. Say exactly who you are working for and why. You should prevent people from developing unrealistic expectations. Does the person think you can help them in a practical way? Make sure the interviewee understands you are not with a human rights organisation

· Explain why it is important to make things known. The goal is to tell the world. The victim may not want this, and if so you should respect their wishes. The first thing you should agree on with your interviewee is whether you can use their name, or whether they prefer to stay anonymous.

· If you agree to hand information to a human rights organisation, the interviewee has a right to know to which organisation, specifically, whether it is to local branches or international headquarters, and when you will hand over that information.

· Confirm basic details first: the name and age of interviewee, for example. Interviews often break down unexpectedly midway, and people move around and get moved around a lot in conflict situations. So you should assume this is the only time you will ever see this person; you have one chance only to get their personal details.

· Confirm supporting details: clear descriptions of places, names of all present at event, their positions, ranks. Any recognizable uniforms or insignia on perpetrators. Weapons seen or used.

· Ask repeatedly about timing and the sequence of events. Most human rights violations take place in chaotic conditions. Add that to the trauma of the victim, and many people quickly become very confused about the order of events. Have the interviewee repeat his story several times. Don't be afraid to say: "I know this is difficult for you, but could you describe the whole incident again?" Compare the stories of different witnesses. You should be looking for inconsistencies between their stories, but also beware of everyone telling you exactly the same story - they may have been briefed beforehand.



Remember that while you the journalist may be able to get out, many people you interview can't

“Try to interview those who are accused as well as those who say they are victims”

· Appreciate the degree of stress in the interview. Take breaks if possible, and offer water or tea. These interviews can be very traumatic for the interviewees and for the journalist both.

Interviewing the accused

· If possible, it is important to interview the people accused of human rights violations. This depends on risk factors, but your story will be stronger with comment from both sides. One thing to remember is that you will probably not be the first person telling them about the allegation.

· If you do manage to interview the people accused, again be open and honest. Never pretend you are asking about something else - this is not only unethical but dangerous if you are found out. Explain that you are giving him a chance to tell his side.

1.4 House Styles

“House styles simply allow a newspaper to speak with one voice”

A house style is an agreed set of conventions that a newspaper or publication will use in all its articles, across all its writers. If the point of a newspaper is to convey as much information with as little effort as possible, a uniform style across the newspaper is one of the tools to achieve that. A regular reader can always expect information to be presented in the same way, so the publication "speaks with one voice", rather than having to continually adjust expectations to different writers and articles. Think of written style like spoken dialect. There is nothing wrong with different dialects in a language: a Kabuli accent or a Mazaari or Qandahari or Herati. But if the same person spoke to you in all four dialects at different times, it would disturb you. In the same way, if a publication wants to be considered as one consistent voice, it must standardise its style.



Every mature newspaper has its own house style

Exercise 2: Newspapers and house styles

Read three Afghan newspapers and answer the following questions for each newspaper:

- In your opinion, does the newspaper currently use a house style?
- Name two examples of the newspaper using different terms to describe the same thing: for example, using *jereeb*s as a unit of land measurement in one story and hectares in another. Quote specific examples of stories by page and date in the newspaper.
- Write one paragraph on the newspaper's general writing style, and its effect on the reader.

Nearly all printed publications around the world have house styles. If you are an editor, you should think about establishing one for your publication. If you are a writer or journalist, you need to be aware that you may have to conform to one. A house style is the sign of a mature and robust publication as opposed to one which is struggling to establish itself.

Examples

A simple example is dates. Afghanistan uses a solar calendar, the main Hijri Islamic calendar is lunar, and the Western calendar, in widespread use internationally, dates from the birth of Christ. This means the same year is respectively 1381, 1421 and 2002. So how should a newspaper describe dates to the reader? If it uses the solar calendar, what about when it is quoting Western officials who are using their own calendars? Should it convert the date straight away: "*George Bush said there had been no progress since Saddam Hussein threw out UN weapons inspectors in 1377.*" Should it use his original date then provide a conversion into the Afghan solar calendar: "*George Bush said there had been no progress since Saddam Hussein threw out UN weapons inspectors in 1998 (1377).*" There is no right answer here - except that the newspaper should decide on which style to use and stick to it.

Another example for Afghan media is how English words should be integrated into the Dari or Pashto text. It is quite common to find in the same newspaper an English phrase like "UN" or "NGO" that sometimes is in English letters, other times has been put into Dari pronunciations, and yet other times has been spelled out in Dari. But the newspaper should have a consistent policy towards English acronyms and phrases.

Even the choice of verbs can be very telling. Reuters news agency has a house style which forbids using the words *promise* or *threaten* when paraphrasing what someone has said. The point is that both



Afghanistan seen from the air: a small ribbon of green surrounded by harsh desert

*“A house style
is only right or
wrong for a
particular
audience”*

carry meanings, one positive and one negative, that indicate a particular position towards what is said, when Reuters house style is to be always impartial. For example, if the leader of country A says he will go to war against country B to defend his principles, from country A's point of view he is *promising* to defend its principles, whereas from country B's point of view he is *threatening* to go to war. When Reuters insists that its journalists use neutral words like *says*, *states* or *declares*, it is upholding one of its important editorial principles: that it does not take sides in conflicts between countries. But it can only do this by enforcing rules on all of its 1500 journalists on which verbs are acceptable descriptions of leader A's words and which are unacceptable.

A style guide is not right or wrong, it is only right or wrong for a particular audience. It is possible for two publications to have different styles on a particular point and both be “correct”. For example, the Economist is a well regarded magazine which always uses the words Mr or Ms to describe people it is writing about: *Mr Hussein*, *Mr Hekmatyar*, *Mr Bush*. Reuters always describes people by their surname only: *Hussein*, *Hekmatyar*, *Bush*. It is impossible to say who is right and who is wrong.

2.1 Journalism Safety

According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, 37 journalists were killed around the world in 2001. Over the decade 1992-2001, some 389 journalists have been confirmed as being killed as a result of their work.

In Afghanistan, eight journalists were killed in the fighting in 2001. Three were killed when Taliban attacked a Northern Alliance convoy on the road to Taloqan on November 11. Four more were killed when their convoy was ambushed, and they were taken away and executed in Nangahar province on November 19, and one was shot dead at a guest house in Taloqan, apparently during an armed robbery.

A journalist's work in war zones is always dangerous. But there are some very simple principles you can follow which will vastly reduce your level of risk.

Don't submit to peer group pressure

The single most important rule is do not follow anyone else, whether it is another journalist or soldiers fighting on the front line. Always make your own decisions.

It is easy to get caught up in the adrenalin of a war situation and easy to be affected by what other people think about you. Suppose a group of soldiers are moving up to the front line and invite you to go with them. Never think about whether to accept or reject the invitation based on what they might think about you. Remember, if you feel yourself getting excited, you will not be thinking clearly.

It is not a question of personal courage. Your job is different to theirs. Their job is to fight, and



Never forget: he has his job and you have yours

“Men in the front line of battle almost never know what is going on - there is too much movement and noise”

maybe to die, defending a piece of ground. Yours is to live, to report what you see back to the outside world. Journalists occasionally have to put themselves in some degree of risk, but there is no story in the world so important that it justifies endangering your life.

Consider whether moving into danger will advance the story at all. Most of the time it will not. It is your job as a journalist to try and find out what is going on, the overall picture of the conflict. Experienced soldiers know that the men in the front line of a battle almost never know what is going on. There is too much movement and noise. You may easily find out far more about the situation - and do your job better and more professionally - three kilometres back than actually on the front line. Also, remember that the job of a journalist is different to that of a photographer. A photographer has to get those one or two pictures that capture the essence of the war. But there are no magic one or two bullets, or one or two killings, which capture the essence of the war in the same way for the writer.

Of course, it is important to be brave. But you do not need to show your bravery to anyone. It is often more courageous to take your own independent decision, than to simply go along with everyone else because you are frightened about what they might think about you.

“Whenever you talk to someone, identify yourself as a journalist”

Target awareness

Always carry journalist ID with you. Never carry a weapon with you - if you approach the fighting with soldiers from one side, and fall into the hands of soldiers from the other side, why should they believe that you are neutral if you are carrying a weapon?

Whenever you talk to someone, identify yourself as a journalist. If you say anything else, you risk being shot as a spy if things go wrong later on. It is better to not get through a checkpoint than to get through on false pretences.



How do they look for targets?

*“Cut your time
at the front line to a
minimum”*

Develop an awareness of what might be a target to someone on the other side. Wear clothes of different colours, for example, so that even from a distance you do not seem like a soldier, whose uniform is likely to be one colour. Avoid khaki and other military colours. Also, make sure your clothes are not bright and do not mark you out.

Be aware of which points immediately around you are targets: the doors to a fort for example. If you're near a spot where combatants are firing out, you can assume that before long they will draw return fire, especially if they are using heavier weapons. So move away.

If you're carrying a videocamera, remember that from a distance, held to the face, it can seem like a grenade launcher. If you feel under threat, take the camera off your shoulder, and show it side on, so that the opposing side can see what it is.

Minimise your time at the front. If you decide you do have to go, make sure you have a specific goal - to conduct an interview with one or two soldiers on the front line, for example, or to survey the landscape of the two front lines. Plan your trip beforehand, and make sure you can leave when you want to. Do not go to the front line just to hang around or for the experience.

Make sure you can leave when you want to, and do not depend on soldiers for your transport away. Also, make sure you tell other people about your travel plan, giving precise details, so that somebody else knows if you have not come back as planned.

Weapons recognition

When you are in a war zone, always try to think of things from the soldier's point of view. You can get a long way towards analysing how dangerous the current situation is by knowing a few simple things about weapons and the technical aspects of fighting.

Heavy weapons

Distinguish between whether heavy weapons fire is artillery or mortar. Artillery



“Figure out if incoming fire has a pattern to it”

has a low flat trajectory which means you can take cover from it behind the lee of a hill. Mortar is high, so has less range, but you cannot hide from it in the same way.

Try to work out if the incoming fire is direct - has a line of sight - or is indirect, using a spotter. If it is indirect, then its readjustment to specific targets will be slower. Remember, too, that without sophisticated guidance systems accuracy is only to within 100 metres - which means if you are 50 metres away from the target, you could still take a direct hit.

Figure out the pattern of successive incoming rounds. A shot may have landed far away because it is a ranging shot. If the next one is closer, you should be moving away before the third one hits the target.

The impact of heavy weapons rounds varies considerably over different terrain. It achieves maximum impact on hard, flat ground. The best place to be when a round lands is flat on the ground, because the impact will create a hole which drives the shrapnel upwards. If you are out on a flat plain, away from cover, when a round has just landed, the best place to be when the next round comes in is directly in the shell hole of the first. Your instinct will be to run, but actually you are much better off lying flat in an artillery strike area than running.

If you are in a building, you are safer under staircases or beams in the house. Do not stand near a window with glass in it. If you are in a building for some time under fire, knock the glass out.

If you are travelling in a convoy of vehicles, try not to go in the first or last vehicles. The classic tactic of artillery or airplanes will be to try and knock out the first and last vehicles and then trap all the others in between. Once out of the vehicle, run off and away from the road if you can, rather than down it, where you are a natural target for strafing, or being picked off by snipers.

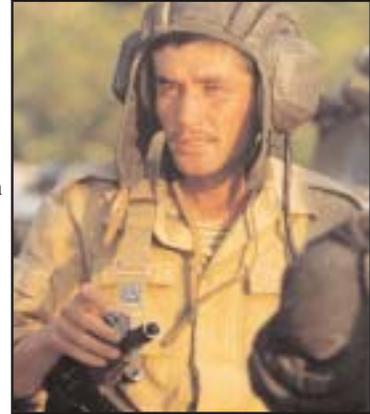
Small weapons

In the Second World War, there were about a million rounds of small arms fire fired for every person killed. Although it may seem strange when you are in the middle of a conflict, your chances of surviving are probably quite good. Most fire goes high.

In Afghanistan, the older generation of mujahideen are known for being better shots than the younger generation, who grew up around guns but did not train properly on them. The armies of Western countries

“The AK47 is the most popular rifle - but it is not accurate”

generally estimate that a trained soldier is only accurate up to 20 metres. With personnel from other armies or militias, it may be even less. What this means is that your chances of escaping from someone in the distance waving their weapon at you may be higher than you think.



In Afghanistan the major light weapon is the AK47. It is popular because it is very robust, easy to train someone to use, and has reasonable range - it can penetrate both sides of a metal helmet at 1100 metres. But it is not accurate. Weapons in Afghanistan come mainly from eastern Europe - from Russia, but also Bulgaria and the former Yugoslavia. In the south and east there are also guns made in the workshops of Qandahar.

Forget what he looks like: what is the range of his weapon? is the safety catch on? What can you tell from the way he is holding it?

The AK47 has its safety catch on the right hand side which as most people are right handed means you can normally see what position it is in. Up means it is off. The first down position is fully automatic, the second further down is single shot. Most undisciplined armies nearly always have it on fully automatic all the time.

Mines

Afghanistan is one of the most mined countries in the world. Experts estimate that there maybe five million mines in the country, and an optimistic view is that it would take until 2010 to demine the country.

Most, but not all, mined areas have now been demarcated by organisations. But you can also use common sense to predict where mines might be. If you see a field lying fallow, for example, while all other land in an area has been cultivated, it may indicate mines. Or, thinking yourself into the position of a commander defending a fort, you will place mines on and near the major approaches.

There are two kinds of mines: anti-personnel and anti-tank. Anti-tank are big and are designed not to detonate when one person treads on them. But they are nearly always protected by the smaller anti-personnel mines that trigger at any pressure.



Mines are likely to be all over Afghanistan for decades to come

*“Basic first aid
knowledge could
save your life”*

First aid

There is not enough space here to explain first aid procedures - only to stress the importance of learning first aid, which can increase your chances of surviving a serious accident by several times.

Many more people die in wars of disease and their wounds than in actual fighting. After serious accidents, in fact, the first five minutes are usually what decides if someone is going to live or die - so there is no point sitting back and hoping that the doctor will sort it out.

A first aid course of two days will teach you how to deal with major blood loss wounds, breakage of bones, burns and all other likely eventualities.

2.2 Sourcing in Stories

One of the most important principles in news journalism is that every story not only needs to have strong sourcing, but that the writer needs to show these sources to the reader. A good news story allows the reader to form their own judgements of an event or incident based on sources quoted in the story. Showing sourcing is particularly important in stories about conflicts or disputes - it is the journalist's own protection against accusations of bias or partiality.

When sources are not necessary

The only time when specific sourcing is not necessary for information is when it is not disputed by anyone. Below is a passage of background from a story which happened during the Loya Jirga, when delegates voted to add the word Islamic to the name of the new government, the "National Islamic Transitional Government of Afghanistan".

"Under Zahir Shah, the government was known simply as the Kingdom of Afghanistan. After the king was overthrown in 1973, the new president Daoud Khan pronounced it the Republic of Afghanistan, and when Afghan communists and then the Soviets seized power, they referred to it as the People's Democratic Republic of Afghanistan.

With the arrival of the mujahedin in 1992, it was known as the Islamic State of Afghanistan. After the Taliban takeover, it became the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan; the student militia regarding words such as state and republic as irreligious. After their fall, the word Islamic was proposed for use in the title of the interim administration, but this was not taken up."

These two paragraphs contain facts that are not disputed by anyone. The information can be given without a source.



"Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan" - a statement so obvious it needs no source

Exercise 3: Statements which do not need sources

Do the following statements require sourcing? Answer yes or no. See the Answers Section at the back for the right answer.

Statement	Yes	No
<i>1) Afghanistan is trying to recover from 23 years of war and suffers from widespread poverty and social problems.</i>		
<i>2) Pakistan helped Afghan refugees when they first arrived after the Soviet invasion of 1980. But in recent years, Pakistan has interfered in Afghanistan's internal affairs.</i>		
<i>3) Getting the right balance between Afghanistan's different ethnic groups has always been an important part of forming any government in the country.</i>		
<i>4) Getting the right balance between Afghanistan's different ethnic groups has always been an important part of forming any government in the country. In particular, the Pashtoon majority need to be adequately represented.</i>		
<i>5) Herat lies almost 800 km to the west of Kabul. It takes two or three days to get there by road.</i>		

Reporter or named reliable eyewitness

The strongest source is when the reporter herself, or another reliable eyewitness, has seen what is being described. Sometimes, this could justify the source being omitted, as in the following example:

"Women stood outside the Loya Jirga compound forcefully articulating their views in interviews with journalists, many of them also Afghan women."

If the source is left out, it must be clear from the context provided in the rest of the story that the reporter witnessed these events herself. Otherwise, the source should be mentioned:



"Our correspondent Sayyid Jamal got to the scene

about 20 minutes after the blast. He reported five bodies on the ground and dozens of policemen trying to move the crowd away."

The best source is one of your own reporters or a reliable eyewitness

Authoritative sources

The next best source after a reliable eyewitness is someone who has authority in the area for which they are being asked to give information. The defence minister, for example, is clearly an authoritative source about defence matters. But be careful: he is not as authoritative in areas outside his own expertise, such as finance or diplomatic relations. If possible, always give a source's full name as well as position: *"Defence Minister Mohammed Fahim said weapons collection programmes were progressing well."*

Official sources

An official source is someone who has access to information because of their job (although they may not be the person in charge). So a police

"Be careful in judging exactly which areas a source has authority in"

Exercise 4: Turning passive into active sourcing

Following is a list of sources and the information they have given. Turn the passively sourced statements into active ones. For example:

Source: an interior ministry official

Information: At least a dozen people lay bleeding at the scene of the bomb.

Passively sourced statement: Many people could be seen lying bleeding at the scene of the bomb.

ACTIVELY SOURCED ANSWER:

An interior ministry official said dozens of people lay bleeding at the scene of the bomb.

1) **Source:** a European diplomat

Information: Negotiations between the two sides have broken down over the issue of refugees.

Passively sourced statement: It is worthy of note that negotiations between the two sides have broken down because of refugees.

2) **Source:** a presidential spokesman

Information: President Hamed Karzai is anxious to control the warlords soon.

Passively sourced statement: It is well known that the president wants to control the warlords soon.

3) **Source:** a trader in the market

Information: The price of sugar has risen by 50 per cent in the last six months.

Passively sourced statement: It can be said that the price of sugar has risen by 50 per cent in the last six months.

officer might be an official source about a security story, a civil servant in a story about government policy, an NGO or UN worker for a story about humanitarian affairs, and so on. Again, quote the full name and title if possible: "*Abdel Baseer Mohammadi, a deputy at the Ministry of Economy, said prices had fallen 20 per cent since the same time last year.*"

Singular and plural

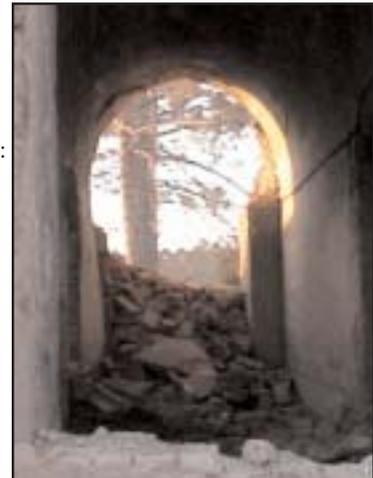
Never make sources plural if they are singular. If one diplomat has told you something, the source is "*a diplomat*" not "*diplomatic sources*". If one policeman, then "*a policeman*" not "*police sources*".

Two source rule

The golden rule of sourcing is this: to treat something as certain, you need to confirm it from two reliable and mutually independent sources. "Mutually independent" means that source A did not learn the information from source B or vice versa and that sources A and B did not learn the information from some same source C. Never present anything as certain until it has passed this "two sources" test. If you have only one source for a particular detail and you feel it is important to report, tell your reader: "Source A says..." or "Source A alleges..."

Active, not passive, sourcing

The international style of news reporting does not generally use passive sourcing such as "*it was understood negotiations will finish today*" or "*it was believed*". You must say who understood negotiations will finish today, as by putting this phrase in the passive, you are automatically validating it as true. What happens if negotiations do not finish today?



Looking out from the fortress at Qala-e Jangi where over 300 foreign fighters linked to al-Qaeda were killed in November 2001. Qala-e Jangi is a perfect example of a story which is especially difficult journalistically because we only have sources from one side.

Traditionally, writing in Afghanistan uses a lot of passive verbs, which are more commonly used in Persian than they are in English. But in news stories, each passive verb leaves a question unanswered: if you write "it could be seen that" you raise the question who saw? Writing in the passive tense is a way of



being polite; it is a common practice to say things in the passive tense to avoid any sense of confrontation or rudeness. But journalistic writing is different: sourcing addresses the question "How do we know?" and requires active attribution. We know 12 people died in the fighting because somebody told us. We know production of pistachios is up this year because a government statement said so.

Location of sourcing

Sourcing should come near the beginning of every story, but its precise location depends on how controversial the story is. If, for example, the story is about an official visit by the president of Afghanistan to Pakistan, the fact of the visit is likely to be relatively uncontroversial, so the sourcing would not have to be mentioned in the lead paragraph.

But if the story was highly doubtful or contained an allegation, the source would have to come before even the information: *"President Ahmed of Mithalistan accused President Mohammed of Sakhtestan of genocide on Monday."*

Circumstances of statements

Always try to tell your reader the circumstances of how the information was obtained. For example, *"said at a news conference"*, *"in a statement to reporters"*, or *"in an interview with this newspaper"*.

Expressions of opinion

If the story involves a dispute between two or more parties, and you only have access to one side of a dispute, only use sources for facts not for opinions. For example: *"A Mithalistani diplomat said the two foreign ministers met secretly last week"* not *"A Mithalistani diplomat said Sakhtestan's policies were evil"*.

Similarly, anonymous sources should only be used for facts, not opinions.

*"Always tell
your reader the
circumstances of
how the information
was obtained"*

2.3 Story Structure

The story structure we explain here is the style of international journalism. Different countries have different journalistic traditions. One style is not necessarily better than the other. Our job here is to present the style and structure of international journalism to you so that you can decide whether to use it or another tradition.



Exercise 5: How people read newspapers

Watch three people reading newspapers. Time when they begin and when they put the newspaper down. Do not say anything to them while they read, but after they have finished, see if you can review with them how many headlines they read, and how many stories in full. Count how many stories there are in the newspaper. Work out what proportion of stories in the newspaper each reader read, and how long she spent on each one. Following is a sample report:

“Reader A started reading newspaper B at 3:20 and finished at 3:40. Afterwards, when we reviewed the newspaper, we discovered she had read two articles right to the end, two more part of the way through, and the first paragraphs of another four, making a total of eight stories. There were 85 stories in that edition of newspaper B, which means reader A read less than 10% of them. She spent an average of two and a half minutes on each article.”

The reader comes first

Writing news stories differs from other kinds of writing. The main difference Watch how people actually read newspapers comes from

what the reader expects and why she is reading. When reading literature, for example, the reader wants to be entertained and held in suspense. This means the author starts a story from the beginning, sets the time and place, describes the scene, then slowly weaves the threads of his story together until a climax is reached, usually near the end of the story. The writer deliberately holds back the climax to build suspense and to make sure the reader reads the entire story.

But a news story in a newspaper is the opposite. Although the reader might hope to be entertained, the main reason he is reading is to be informed. There is no guarantee that the reader will have time to finish the story and the writer must cater to that.

Spend 15 minutes watching someone read a newspaper and it is clear that there is a completely different pattern to reading from a book. With a newspaper, the reader turns the pages, sometimes slow, sometimes fast, scanning a page in a few seconds. There are many different “places” within a newspaper for the reader to go, and many articles competing for his attention. With a book, the reader has nowhere else to go. The writer

“The reader can get all essential information without reading to the end”

can control the pace a lot more, and tell events at his own speed.

This is reflected in the way a news story is constructed. In the tradition of international journalism, the climax, the most important material, is presented first.

This method packs the most important facts together with the barest necessary explanation into the first paragraph (called “the lead”), then moves into the detailed portion of the story (called “the body”) by covering the facts in diminishing order of importance.

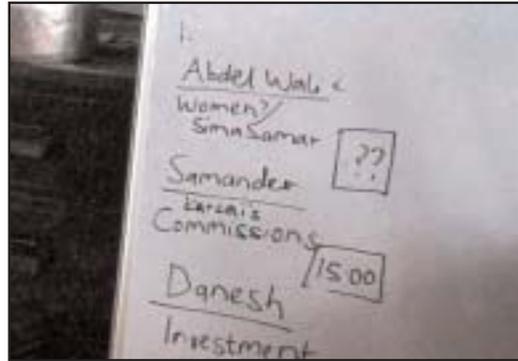
This form of newswriting is commonly known as the “inverted pyramid” style because when it is made into a diagram, it appears as an upside-down pyramid.

The inverted pyramid structure

The inverted pyramid style offers several distinct advantages.

It helps the reader save time. A lead contains the most important facts and allows the reader to take in the whole story quickly. The reader can decide whether to continue reading the details or to go on to something else. But even if the reader stops there, the inverted pyramid form of writing has provided the essential facts. The primary objective of a news story then is not to withhold information, but to present the facts with rapid, simple directness.

It also helps the editor plan the newspaper. The inverted pyramid method is vital for an editor planning a newspaper, because it allows her to cut the length of stories very quickly, and adapt to fast changing circumstances. Suppose the editor has asked the reporter to write a story of 800 words. But meanwhile, the president of the country has declared war on its neighbour, or been assassinated, or some other very important story has broken suddenly - and nearly all really important stories break suddenly. Now the editor has to redirect the newspaper to cover the breaking story, which means she has less space for the story she



The inverted pyramid helps a fast moving newspaper meet a daily deadline

“Editors often have to change stories at the last minute”

originally asked the reporter to do.

If the story has been written in inverted pyramid form, it becomes a simple matter of cutting lines from the bottom of the story until it fits the available space.

Inverted pyramid example

The Loya Jirga on Thursday comprehensively endorsed Hamed Karzai as transitional head of state, with nearly 1300 delegates backing him in a secret ballot for the post. His closest rival, medical doctor Masouda Jalal, got just 171 votes.

The result was never in doubt. Jalal made an impressive speech but was only ever a spoiler candidate. She at least ensured that Karzai, who has made an international name for himself by running the interim administration since the fall of the Taliban, would not suffer the embarrassment of standing uncontested.

89 words cut point

The only other known political leader to have formally thrown his hat into the ring was ex-president Burhanuddin Rabbani. But he withdrew on Monday, shortly after having been heckled by a group of women delegates upset by the bloodshed during his 1992-96 term in office.

134 words cut point

Karzai, who has over the past few months shown his mastery of international diplomacy, has also this week proved to be an adept and confident public speaker, presenting himself as both the man who has put Afghanistan on the world map and the man who can unite the country's complex mosaic of ethnic groups and ideologies. He will rule the country for the next two years until general elections, according to the Bonn agreement of last December.

208 words cut point

A third candidate, Mir Mohammad Nedaii, garnered 89 votes. There were six spoiled and six blank ballots. Abstentions were not officially announced, but going by Loya Jirga chief Ismail Qassimyar's estimate on Wednesday of 1650 voting delegates, there were 83.

248 words cut point

"I hope Karzai succeeds in his job and works well for the country. I hope he helps the poor people of Afghanistan," said Qassimyar.

272 words cut point

The audience rose to their feet and clapped rhythmically when they heard the result. "In the name of God. I am very proud that you all believe in me. It is a big burden. You trust in me as a poor Muslim that I will help the country. We pray for the people who died in this country," Karzai said in his victory speech.

336 words cut point

The news lead

Journalism is all about answering questions. There is nothing more unsatisfactory to a reader than to have a news story raise questions and leave them unanswered.



Specifically, in English we talk about the Six Sisters of journalism, questions that need to be answered in every story a journalist writes. These are: Who, What, When, Where, hoW and Why?

The first paragraph - the lead - is the most important part of any story. You should spend as much time on it as the whole of the rest of the story put together.

Exercise 6: Rewriting the lead for each of the Six Sisters

Take each of the following leads and rewrite them leading with each of the Six Sisters, as demonstrated in the table on this page with the farmer from Jabal-o Siraj and the fire in his house.

1) Traffic ground to a halt in the middle of Qandahar on Saturday when five camels broke loose from their owners and ran up and down the middle of the market. Two small boys were injured by the animals who were recaptured after half an hour.

2) An earthquake erupted in the northern district of Taloqan yesterday, killing hundreds of local residents and destroying thousands of houses, according to eyewitness accounts.

3) Several hundred students in Kabul University protested against their living conditions on Tuesday, marching through the center of Kabul waving banners and calling for the government to improve their situation.

Sister	Lead
WHO	A farmer near Jabal-o Siraj saved his house from burning down yesterday by diverting water from an irrigation canal and funnelling it onto the flames.
WHAT	A house was saved from being burnt down because a farmer diverted water from an irrigation canal to dowse a fire which threatened it.
WHEN	Yesterday, a farmer saved his house from being destroyed by fire by diverting water from an irrigation canal onto flames that were consuming it.
WHERE	At a village near Jabal-o Siraj, a farmer prevented his house from burning down by dowsing a fire with water from an irrigation canal.
WHY	To prevent his house from burning down, a farmer near Jabal-o Siraj yesterday diverted an irrigation canal to use the water to dowse the flames.
HOW	By diverting water from an irrigation canal and using a siphon, a farmer near Jabal-o Siraj yesterday saved his house from burning down.

The job of the lead paragraph in the inverted pyramid style is to answer as many of them as can be fitted into one simple paragraph. The lead of a straightforward news story is normally not more than 25 words, and less if possible. It can be one sentence or two sentences, but it should be short, easy-to-read, and give the reader enough to stop reading at that point having understood the essentials of the story.

Often the most important of the Six Sisters are Who and What: the United States attacked Iraq, the Economy Minister resigned, the football team won the cup. But potentially, any of the Six Sisters can be the driving force behind the lead. The following table demonstrates how you could write the same story emphasising any of the Six Sisters.

Exercise 7: Analyse leads for their elements

Below are the same leads as for the last exercise. Take each of the following leads and analyse them in terms of their elements, as with the table on the right.

1) Traffic ground to a halt in the middle of Qandahar on Saturday when five camels broke loose from their owners and ran up and down the middle of the market. Two small boys were injured by the animals who were recaptured after half an hour.

2) An earthquake erupted in the northern district of Taloqan yesterday, killing hundreds of local residents and destroying thousands of houses, according to eyewitness accounts.

3) Several hundred students in Kabul University protested against their living conditions on Tuesday, marching through the center of Kabul waving banners and calling for the government to improve their situation.

Sister	Lead
WHO WHEN WHAT HOW	The Loya Jirga on Thursday endorsed Hamed Karzai as transitional head of state with nearly 1300 delegates backing him in a secret ballot for the post
WHO WHAT WHEN WHY	The Afghan government called for a bigger share of overseas funding this week alleging that much of it is being squandered by western aid agencies
WHAT WHERE WHEN HOW WHY	Independence Day celebrations went ahead in Kabul last week with little of the usual pomp and circumstance after the military was told to stay away
WHO WHEN WHAT HOW WHERE WHY	Two unknown gunmen today killed Vice-President Haji Abdel Qadir as he left his office in the center of Kabul. Their motive was not immediately known.

Here is some analysis of news story leads, identifying the elements in them.

Feature and novelty leads

Although the straight news lead is the simplest, safest and strongest of all leads used in straight news writing, often you might want to add a little variety when leading into a story.

Feature leads are a vital part of newspaper writing. The feature lead permits you to take a mundane straight news piece and transform it into a story that captures the interest and empathy of the readers.

<p>CONTRAST: Compares two extremes, to dramatise a story. Old/young, past/present</p>	<p>Israeli and Palestinian generals smiled and toasted each other at Palestinian police headquarters in Gaza when the last Israeli troops pulled out of the Strip on Wednesday. On the streets, Israeli troops and Palestinian youths marked the occasion a different way with a final ritual "clash", complete with insults, jostling, stonethrowing and tear gas.</p>
<p>PICTURE: Draws a vivid picture of the person or thing at the centre of the story. Allows the reader to see what you see.</p>	<p>Wearing an open shirt, chain-smoking and drinking sweet tea, Gamal Abdel-Halim Hassan barely resembles the stern judge who caused a storm by recommending a street hanging for a convicted drugs dealer. "You shouldn't think I'm a harsh man because I give out death sentences," said Hassan, 59, who dresses in sombre black suit and sash for court.</p>
<p>PUNCH: The punch lead is designed to deliver a surprise jolt to the reader.</p>	<p>It wasn't such a bad day in this ruined south Sudan village. Only four people starved to death and the dirt airstrip was dry enough for a light plane to land four times with food.</p>
<p>DIRECT ADDRESS: This approach addresses the reader directly and aims to make them collaborate in the story.</p>	<p>Imagine a hospital where you have to bring your own medicines with you, there is no food, the staff don't even have basic equipment like scissors and dressings and you sleep two or sometimes three to a bed. This is the situation in Kabul's three main children's hospitals, where conditions are deteriorating so rapidly that the death toll among patients is rising.</p>
<p>QUESTION: A variation on the direct address, it asks a question and then answers it.</p>	<p>Stomach ache? Try pouring oil on a piece of cotton, burning it, then spreading the ashes on the affected area. Trouble seeing? Get a fly, put it on the lense of the eye and then shut the eyelid tight, with the fly inside. Epilepsy? Grind the dried marrow of some camel bones, then get the patient to breathe in the dust. In a country where conventional health facilities scarcely exist, and many of the men wearing white coats and stethoscopes are unqualified quacks, millions of ordinary Afghans turn to the only practitioners they can find: self-appointed "traditional healers".</p>

Novelty leads differ from summary leads in that they make no attempt to answer all of the five Ws and the H. As the name implies, novelty leads are novel. Their purpose is to attract the reader's attention and curiosity. Feature leads must fit the mood of the story. If you want to set a particular mood or point of view in a story, your intent or tone should be set at the beginning of the story.

But do not get into the habit of trying to write a novelty lead for every story, because they are not always suitable. Novelty leads lose their effect if they are overused.

Exercise 8: Adjectives and factual detail

The purpose of this exercise is to see clearly the difference between using adjectives and using facts to describe a scene or situation.

For each of the following situations, write two descriptions of one paragraph each. In the first one, use three adjectives. In the second one, use three factual statements.

For example:

Situation: *Supper yesterday*

Adjective-led paragraph:

I ate hot and savoury food for the main course, and then we ate something sweet.

Fact-led paragraph:

We ate pilao and salad, followed by fresh watermelon.

1) *Situation: my (or my friend's) wedding*

2) *Situation: My favourite teacher from school*

3) *Situation: The book I most recently read.*

2.4 Use of Detail

Detail is one of the most difficult things for a journalist to get right. Too much detail, and the reader finds it hard to digest the story. Too little, and the news story leaves more questions unanswered than it answers.



Describe the scene in detail: The day's catch at Band-i Amir

Use detail instead of adjectives

As a rule, the journalist should look at every adjective she uses and consider whether it can be replaced by detail. Adjectives are by their nature subjective and are often an indirect way of injecting the journalist's personal opinion into a news story. You may think someone is "furious" or "generous", but if you write these words in a news story, how can you prove them if they are disputed?

Consider these examples:

"The meeting broke up in chaos, with a furious chairman Ali Ahmedi telling the delegates to go home."

"Chairs were overturned and the microphones were switched off as the meeting broke up before its scheduled finishing time. Chairman Ali

“If you are in doubt over the right level of detail, give more rather than less”

“The amount of detail will vary depending on the audience”

Ahmedi stood shouting at the delegates to go home, banging his fist repeatedly on the table.”

Suppose Ali Ahmedi reads the first example and demands a correction, since he denies he was angry or that the meeting broke up in chaos? As long as every fact in the second version is true, it is safe because based on the observable facts. It is much harder for Ahmedi to deny that chairs were overturned, or that he shouted and banged his fist on the table, than it is for him to deny he was angry.

The correct amount of detail

The correct level of detail is also vital. Think of it like trying to focus a camera for a photograph. Too much or too little detail is like getting the focus wrong and getting a picture which is out of focus.



As a reporter, however, if you are in doubt about the right level of detail, provide more rather than less. That gives the editor the choice of whether to include all the detail you report or not. If you omit details about the scene, or people you have interviewed, he cannot include it again later.

Use detail to give the reader the feeling they are there on the scene, watching

Background detail

The minimum basic detail you should try to know when you interview people is their full name and how they relate to the subject of the story.

If, for example, you are writing a story about difficult living conditions in Kabul and you interview a street seller, you should not just describe him as "Abdullah, resident of Kabul", but "Abdullah Karimi, 43, who lives in Macroyan and sells CDs in the bazaar to support his wife and ten children". This allows the reader to come to a better judgement about what Abdullah has to say.

Similarly, if you were reporting a story about a bomb attack and were describing the scene by quoting a policeman, "Mohammed Ajmal, a

police officer who was on the scene shortly after the attack, said" is much better than *"a policeman said"*.

Contextual detail

Consider whether your audience needs context to understand who or what someone is. The amount of context required will vary depending on the audience. For example, for an Afghan audience, you do not need to describe who Zahir Shah is and can simply write *"ex-king Zahir Shah"*. But if you are writing for an international audience, you might need to add more detail like *"Zahir Shah, the former king who was ousted in a 1973 coup"*.

Places also may need context: not just *"Nimruz province"*, but *"Nimruz, a largely desert province in the southwest of country bordering both Iran and Pakistan"*.

Consider whether detail could be added which is relevant to the story. If, for example, Helmand is mentioned in a story about production of opium, it is relevant that the province is the biggest producer of opium in Afghanistan. So instead of saying simply, *"Government troops entered Helmand to destroy crops of poppies"*, you might write *"Government forces entered Helmand, the largest opium producing area in the country, to destroy poppy crops."*

2.5 Quotations

"Direct quotes are like salt on food: they add flavour, but you don't want too much"

There are two kinds of quotations: direct and indirect.

Direct quotation

"Mr Smith why did you kill so many people? Why did you rape our daughters and sisters? Enough is enough," Barbara Brown, a delegate said to him. The tenor of her remarks was reported by several independent witnesses.



If you quote them, get it right word for word.

Direct quotations are like salt on food: they spice up the flavour, but you need to be careful not to use too much. The purpose of a direct quotation

is to convey a point of view or opinion directly and strongly. Direct quotations do this much better than indirect quotations. The direct quotation above is much more powerful than the indirect version below:

Barbara Brown asked Mr Smith why he had killed so many people, and raped so many women, several independent witnesses said.

“Indirect quotes pack a lot of information into a very small space”

Direct quotations must not be changed in any way by the writer - to do so is a serious breach of ethics. When you use a direct quotation, you are telling the reader that these are the words spoken by this person. To change those words would be to invent things. If you have not taken a precise note of what somebody said at the time, or you have not recorded it, you cannot use a direct quote.



Students at Balkh University writing a story using direct and indirect quotes.

Direct quotes should not be used just to carry ordinary information that is not dramatic or unusual. You should not use long direct quotations from officials simply because they are senior.

Indirect quotations

Indirect quotations can always be determined by the fact that they use the word "that". Their purpose is to compress a lot of information into a small space. Unlike direct quotes, the reporter is free to rearrange the words a speaker has said to present them in a different order, or to emphasise one particular thing over another. This is often important to present a more logical, cleaner structure to the reader.

Compare the small and efficient use of space of this indirect quotation...

Mohammadi said that an investment fund holding \$45 million allocated to the programme has already approved 37 projects for joint ventures with Mithalistani nationals for businesses related to the roads, such as

“Long direct quotes give the impression the journalist is under the sway of his interviewee”

petrol stations and equipment repair shops. Of these, six are already up and running.

... with using a direct quotation from the interview to communicate the same information:

Mohammadi said: "Many of our experts have experience in business abroad. Fifteen percent of the \$300 million is allocated to a fund which provides a minority stake in businesses which will be set up related to the roads - running petrol stations, repairing equipment and so on. In addition, the donors guarantee that projects which win funding from the Technology Sub-committee will have first access to other funds available for investment in the private sector. Mithalistani experts who come back to work on the project as managers will automatically be eligible to apply for these funds. We want to use the project so that hundreds of Mithali experts come back with their families, work on the roads project itself for six months to a year and then set up businesses. We have officially approved 37 projects and of these I think maybe half a dozen are already in business."

In English, the indirect quotation uses only 46 words whereas the direct one uses 144 - over three times as much. The excessive use of long direct quotations also gives the impression that the journalist is not truly independent but is under the sway of the important politicians he is quoting.

2.6 Story Selection

Knowing which story to research is a vital skill for a journalist to have. The first and most important skill is knowing the difference between a story and an issue.



Afghanistan's generation of war has had a lasting and devastating effect on the country. But reporters must uncover things which are happening now to write stories which count as journalism.

When a story is not a story

Journalists write stories about things which have happened. Academics, historians, writers and poets write about subjects. But news means something new has happened. It is a dynamic description of action and movement, as opposed to a static description of a general situation.

Exercise 9: Stories and standing issues		
<p>Read the following statements and classify them either as issues or as news stories.</p> <p>See the Answers Section for correct versions.</p>		
Statement	Issue	News
<i>Lots of Afghan children are dying during childbirth, because there are no medical facilities for their mothers. This is especially the case outside Kabul and the major cities.</i>		
<i>The government has sent soldiers down to guard the major trade routes with Pakistan in order to catch traders who are bringing goods across the border without paying customs duties.</i>		
<i>Afghanistan's education ministry has raised \$10 million through launching an appeal for contributions from the public.</i>		
<i>Many Afghans who have returned to the country this year are finding life difficult.</i>		
<i>Some Afghan refugees who returned to Kabul this year have protested outside the municipality because of crowded living conditions.</i>		

Standing Issue (static, no action)	News Story (dynamic, action)
Afghanistan has a lot of mines that still kill people.	A demining NGO has pioneered a new technique to clear mines using dogs.
There is no electricity in most of Kabul.	Electricity has just been restored to Shahr-e Now.
Warlords rule large parts of the country.	The government has sent soldiers to confront a warlord in one of the eastern provinces.
Hospitals suffer from a shortage of drugs.	Doctors have walked out of a hospital in central Kabul to protest at the lack of drugs.
Farmers in Afghanistan grow a lot of poppies.	It is harvest time and farmers in Afghanistan have grown five times more poppies this year than last year.

Types of story

Speaking very broadly and simply, we can say stories generally fall into three categories.

Spot news

Spot news is what most people understand as news in its purest form. Spot news just happens. A plane crashes, a gunman assassinates a politician, a severe storm destroys homes in a region, war breaks out.

Setpiece news

Setpiece news is more predictable. It revolves around events which are scheduled in advance: the president of a country delivering a key speech for example, or a company announcing its financial results for the past year.

“News stories and features have different styles because they have different goals”

The two categories are not mutually exclusive. Sometimes a story is spot news within a scheduled event. For example, the Loya Jirga was scheduled for six months before it happened, but there were still plenty of unexpected spot stories within it - women attacking political leaders, adopting the word Islamic in the name of the new government, Zahir Shah standing down to support Hamed Karzai.

Features

The feature is often about an event or situation that stirs the imagination or emotions. Unlike both spot and setpiece news stories, which are generally reported as soon as they happen, the feature may or may not have taken place, or the situation may or may not have arisen since the last issue of a periodical or delivery of a newscast. The hard news story is aimed solely at informing a reader, whereas a feature story also has an element of trying to entertain the reader and catch their interest.



Buzkashi: what is normal for Afghans may be unusual and interesting for international readers

Principles of story selection: News to whom?

The first rule of selecting a story is to consider the audience. Is it a story they are interested in? That they should know about? For example, an international audience will not be interested in an ordinary car crash which killed two people on the road from Kabul to Jabal-o Siraj. But a Kabul audience will be interested.

Similarly, there are stories an international audience might be interested in because they do not happen elsewhere but which a local audience takes for granted. For example, a feature on the game of buzkashi in Mazar-e Sharif, or the mulberry harvest in the Shomali plain.

The specific illustrates the general

Often, things going on in a place are general trends, or issues, which are hard to pin down. One way of capturing them is to find specific places or

“One definition of news is events powerful people do not want you to cover”

people that illustrate a general trend. If you are writing a story about how educated people have left villages in Afghanistan to live in big cities, then go to one village and describe how many people have left there and where they have gone. If you want to write a story about how music became popular after the Taliban fell, choose an individual band of musicians and report in detail on them: where they perform, how much they are paid, what they did during the time of the Taliban and so on. Then you can fill out the picture with statistics and broad information if they are available.

Man bites dog

To a large extent, journalistic news is simply about the unexpected. If a politician says his group or party is right and the opposing party is wrong, this is expected and is generally not big news. If, however, he admits that he or his party made a mistake, and gives credit to another group he is normally opposed to, this could be very big news - because it is so unexpected.

In English, we call this the Man Bites Dog principle. If a dog bit a man, you would not think to write a story about it. But if a man became really angry with a dog and bit him, this is a story because men do not normally bite dogs. It is automatically interesting and, in this case, amusing to readers.



If you bit him, that would be a story

What someone doesn't want you to cover

Another good general rule of thumb for what makes a good story is when someone tries to stop you reporting about it.

“Any country that wants peace and prosperity must develop good economic journalism”

Exercise 10: The story hidden in the numbers

Sometimes the story is also hidden in the numbers, or at least in the way they are presented by governments or companies trying to influence public opinion. See if you can spot the hidden story in these figures. Write a one paragraph story from the information given below:

The Ministry of Finance in Mithalistan has just announced that it expects to collect \$25 million in taxes from tobacco this year. The ministry says there are five million smokers in Mithalistan and on average each one smokes 20 cigarettes a day. The tax on a single packet of 20 cigarettes is 2000 riyals (5 US cents - there are 40,000 riyals to the US dollar). The ministry says it is very pleased revenues from tobacco have risen by 25 percent from last year's \$20 million.

See the Answers Section for correct version

2.7 Economic Journalism

Economics is all about building stability. Particularly in countries where there is conflict, it is natural to concentrate on war and warlords: who is fighting whom, and who controls what. But if Afghanistan is to develop and leave war behind, it must have a good economy and good economic policies. This requires strong public debate about those policies, and that requires good journalists who understand what economics is about.



Money matters more than politics

What you need

Of course, a lot of economic journalism simply requires the same skills as any other branch of journalism. But in addition, you need three special skills:

- Knowing how to work with numbers
- Knowing how to work with economic concepts
- Contacts in the business and finance world

Working with Numbers

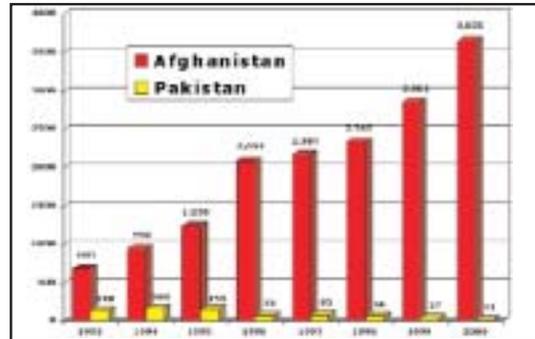
Often, one good number can be the heart of an entire story. For example, "Research reveals only seven per cent of money given to support Afghan education has ended up in the country" or "house prices have increased over 50 per cent in Kabul in the past year, a new survey shows".

Keep it simple. Only be precise if it is important. For example, "wheat imports totalled nearly 180,000 tonnes last year" not "wheat imports totalled 177,823 tonnes last year".

Know your systems of measurement. Stick to the same units of measurement throughout the story. This may mean converting numbers and quantities from one measurement system into another. For example, suppose you are writing a story about the price of medical drugs and you get some prices in Afghani, others in Pakistani rupees, and others in

dollars. You should choose one currency and convert all the other prices into that currency. *"Even a simple painkiller like paracetamol imported from Pakistan can cost as much as 180 rupees (\$3), while the average Afghan worker might earn only one million Afghanis (\$25) a month."*

Compare like to like. If you are writing a story about inflation, try and compare all prices now to the same point in the past, for example, one month or one year ago.



Give a source for your numbers. Particularly in a country like Afghanistan, reliable figures are difficult to find. This makes it even more important to give a source for the numbers you use. For example, *"the government says it has taken on more than 5000 workers already"*.

Numbers can tell the whole story: look at this chart of production of opium in Afghanistan over the last few years, and the story is clear.

Exercise 11: Knowing when someone is talking rubbish

Consider each of the following statements and decide whether they are true or false, according to the laws of economics.

- Inflation is falling because the central bank is printing more money
- The trade deficit is falling because the afghani has depreciated
- Wages have fallen so employment has risen

See Answers Section for at the back of the book

Tell the reader about measurement problems. Explaining what we don't know often tells the reader as much as what we do know. For example, *"Nobody knows exactly how much opium the country will produce this year. The UN estimates between 40,000 and 60,000 tonnes."*

One actual number is worth ten planned numbers. Companies, NGOs and governments are always producing numbers in forecasts and projections - for jobs, profits, donations in the future - that sound fantastic. But most of the time this is their propaganda, not objective journalism.

Working with economic concepts

In political journalism, there is often no objective truth. In economics, on the other hand, you can be right or wrong. It is as simple as that.

Terms like inflation or Gross Domestic Product have precise, not vague, meanings. Master the basic terms so that you don't make mistakes when you use them.

*“In a country
at war, aid is often
the only economy
there is”*

The three stages of development

Economics in a country like Afghanistan is really about development. Development economics is a discipline that has been studied for 50 years and has its own rules and concepts. Find out a little about it. Basically, there are three stages.

- Urgent humanitarian assistance
- Reconstruction
- Development

Urgent humanitarian assistance

In a country at war, emergency aid is often the only kind of economy there is apart from trading in drugs and weapons. International organisations fly in food and temporary shelter for tens of thousands of people made homeless by the fighting. There is no time or peace to think of anything else.

Reconstruction

Reconstruction is the stage Afghanistan has reached after the end of the war. Key pieces of infrastructure need to be rebuilt, like roads, sewerage, water, irrigation and agriculture. Demining is essential and health and education systems particularly



Reconstruction: rebuilding the basic infrastructure which allows economic growth to happen

need to be put back in basic order. The machinery of the state also needs to be put in place, such as law courts and a constitution.

Development

Development is the stage beyond reconstruction, when a country can really begin to produce economic growth. In the development stage, private business begins to flourish and health and education services advance. Development needs several factors in place.

Exercise 12: Setting economic priorities

The point of this exercise is to demonstrate the major dilemma of economics: matching unlimited need to limited resources. You are the government and you have just been given \$100 million. You must allocate it among all the different sectors. There is no right or wrong answer but you may find it interesting to carry out this exercise with colleagues, and compare the different answers you come up with.

Sector	Sample	You?
Infrastructure (building roads, schools etc)	20	??
Defence	20	??
Electricity	5	??
Housing	5	??
Water	10	??
Agriculture	0	??
Industry	0	??
Education	20	??
Demining	10	??
Health	10	??
	100	100

Financial stability. The local currency needs to be relatively stable against foreign currencies, and inflation should be relatively low (excessively high inflation is now considered to be above 30 to 40 per cent per year, while in most of Europe and North America it has settled to under five per cent per year since 1990).

A legal framework. It needs to be clear who has what rights over economic resources. Disputes over land and houses must be settled, and investors must be sure that if they put money into a business, there is a legal system that will stop them being cheated.

Above all, development needs a strategy.

Economic institutions

Institutions are the organisations you should make yourself familiar with as an economic journalist.

Afghan institutions

- Constitution: the laws which define how business takes place
- Central Bank: the government body which issues and controls the Afghani currency
- the Ministry of Finance: produces the government budget
- the Ministry of Taxes: collects taxation for the government from business and people

Global institutions

- the International Monetary Fund: provides short-term finance for governments that are reforming their economies
- the World Bank: provides longer-term finance for countries at the development stage
- Development Banks: for example, the Islamic Development Bank, the Asia Development Bank

3.1 Information Sources in Kabul

UNAMA

Weekly Situation Report. The office of Lakhdar Brahimi. It is in English and publicly available from UNAMA offices in Kabul, Herat, Qandahar and elsewhere.

Weekly Press Conferences: UNAMA also holds weekly press conferences in which it brings together officials from other UN and international organisations to brief journalists on latest developments. UNAMA Press Spokesman Manoel de Silva has said he will offer translation services for Afghan journalists who wish to ask questions.

AIMS

AIMS has been set up specifically as the United Nation's information agency in Afghanistan. The UN says it has recognised from other emergency areas like East Timor and Kosovo that a specialised office for information helps improve development and assistance. This means the specific purpose of the AIMS office in Kabul is to increase public information and they should help all journalists seeking information. Manager Paul Currian.

Directory of Organisations working in Afghanistan. Names, addresses and phone numbers of over 500 organisations working in Afghanistan.

WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME

Emergency Report - from 4000 to 6000 words a week, this report covers WFP's activities in a number of countries including Afghanistan. Available by email from: Zlatan.Milicic@wfp.org
Afghanistan Weekly Situation Report - Outline of all WFP activities in Afghanistan, mainly involving food assistance projects but also the security situation in different provinces, necessary for WFP employees trying to work in different areas.

UNHCR

Regional District Profiles. These exist for the five regional UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) offices in Afghanistan (western, eastern, northern, central and south eastern) and list every single returning refugee, down to families and individuals.

UNDCP

The United Nations Drugs Control Program (UNDCP) is dedicated to monitoring illegal drugs trade around the world. Since Afghanistan is the biggest single exporter of opium to make heroin, the organisation has concentrated a lot of its effort on the country.

Annual Opium Survey estimates how much opium is grown in Afghanistan by province and district every year. It contains a lot of information about how poppies are grown and exported.

The International Committee of the Red Cross and Crescent (ICRC)

Assistance Activities Report. Published every two months or so. About 5000 words. Covers all ICRC activities in Afghanistan, which at the moment includes food assistance and help for internal refugees and prisoners of war.

World Bank

The World Bank has an office and a representative in Kabul. It is responsible for managing the Afghanistan Reconstruction Fund for all international donors, an organisation which is supposed to collect money particularly for the Afghan government. Since the fall of the Taliban government, the World Bank has published the following reports: Food Security Strategy for Afghanistan, Study of Socio-Economic Impacts of Mine Action in Afghanistan, Health Services Delivery, Brief Overview of Afghanistan's Economy, Education for Afghans. The World Bank has a Dari-speaking officer in Kabul responsible for talking to Afghan journalists.

UNICEF

The United Nations Children's Fund publishes updates and press releases regularly from its office in Kabul. The contact person is Eric Laroche.

3.2 Economic and Development Glossary

Balance of Payments	The balance of payments accounts record all flows of money in and out of a country. These flows might result from exports (an inflow or credit) or from imports from abroad (an outflow or debit). They might also arise from other countries investing in the country (inward investment - a credit), or from businessmen investing abroad (a debit). All flows of money are added together and the overall account is then called the balance of payments.
Birth Rate	The number of children born alive each year per 1000 of the population. In general, developing countries have higher birth rates than industrial countries. Afghanistan has one of the highest birth rates in the world but also one of the highest rates of infant mortality.
Black Market	Buying or selling prohibited or illegal goods. This could be because the product itself is illegal, like opium or heroin, or because the conditions of sale are illegal, because, for example, the seller does not have a license or is not paying sales tax. The black market is huge in many developing countries.
Budget Deficit	When the government spends more than it receives in revenues. Government income comes from taxation and customs and other revenue and where this is less than the money the government is spending on defence, education, health, welfare and so on, this is called a budget deficit. Budget deficits are key causes of inflation as governments often print more money to cover the deficit.
Capital	Man-made resources such as machines, factories and offices. Capital is one of the main factors of production. Traditionally, capital was thought of purely as money or assets, which could easily be bought and sold for money, such as property and so on. More recently, economists have started to consider the skills people have to make things - the knowledge of a farmer for how to grow things on his land, or an engineer's ability to build a bridge - as one of the most important engines of prosperity, especially in developing countries. They call these skills "human capital".
Central Bank	A government agency that manages financial institutions. Its most important job is to issue and maintain the domestic currency. Central banks often also regulate private sector and commercial banks in a country. It can be thought of as a "bank for banks".

Comparative Advantage	The concept that people, companies and countries are most efficient when they do the things that they are best at doing. Comparative advantages can come from a combination of natural resources and human skill. Comparative advantage is particularly important in world trade, where countries benefit most by producing and exporting goods and services that they can produce more efficiently (at a lower cost, by using less physical, human and natural capital) than other goods and services.
Consumption	Expenditure on goods and services that satisfy current wants. It is a key component of demand.
Costs, fixed and variable	All producers of goods and services in the market face costs - a farmer must pay for seeds, a doctor must pay for surgical equipment. Costs are divided between fixed and variable. Fixed costs are for things you need before you even start working - a farmer for his land, for example, or a doctor for his medical education. Variable costs are payments for items you need to make individual items. See also: "diminishing returns", "marginal cost".
Death Rate	The yearly number of deaths per 1000 of the population
Debt and Debt Servicing	Debt is the total amount of money owed by a country. Afghanistan has relatively little debt, because the war prevented past governments from borrowing money to develop the country. Many developing countries now have debt which is so high that paying it back - debt servicing - takes up most of their current earnings. The question of how much debt should be forgiven, or cancelled, is very controversial around the world.
Demand	Demand is the want or need for a product, backed by an ability to pay. It is determined by a number of factors including income, tastes and the price of complementary and substitute goods. If demand increases for a particular good, then its price will rise. For example, rents on houses in Kabul rose enormously when thousands of Afghan refugees returned home and needed a place to live.
Devaluation	What happens when the government deliberately lowers the value of the exchange rate of its local currency. See also: "exchange rate".
Diminishing Returns, law of	The idea that there is one correct level of production or activity to produce any one good. For example, a farmer might hire labourers to harvest his wheat. Each of the first ten workers is responsible for harvesting a tonne of wheat each, or ten tonnes in total. But when the farmer hires another ten peasants, he finds they only harvest another five tonnes between them, or half a tonne each, because they are working in fields which are further away, or are not given such good tools. The farmer gets diminishing returns from the second ten workers.

Economic Development	Economic development is a broader concept than economic growth. It combines growth with an improvement in living standards. Economic growth does not take into account how GDP is distributed or the degree of poverty that exists or how much access people have to basic needs such as schooling, health and social services. Economic development does. Sometimes the term "human development" is used to describe economic development in an even broader sense. Once the distinction has been made between growth and development then thought must be given to whether simple growth indicators like GDP are suitable to measure the general state of development in a country.
Economic Growth	Typically refers to an increase in a country's output of goods and services. Economic growth can either be nominal - because the same amount of goods are being made but inflation has pushed up their prices - or real, when more goods are actually being produced or their real value - measured by foreign currencies - has risen. See also: "economic development".
Economies of Scale	A reduction in the costs of an individual item by making more of them. For example, it might cost \$1 to buy five kilograms of rice but only \$6 to buy 50 kilograms, because the seller is happier to accept a lower rate for more sales.
Entrepreneurship	The ability and willingness to undertake new businesses. Business in a safe industry or country involves basic management, but entrepreneurship is often associated with innovating and taking risks. Entrepreneurs are vital for a country's economy, because when successful, they grow much more quickly than established, older companies.
Equity	Refers to a share or portion of ownership, usually in the form of shares. If a company issues 100 shares, each share represents 1% of the company's value.
Exchange Rate	The price of one country's currency in terms of another's. For example, one US dollar buys 120 Japanese yen.
Family Planning	A health service that helps families decide how many children to have and when.
Fertility Rate	The average number of children a woman will have during her lifetime. The total fertility rate in developing countries is between three and four; in industrial countries it is less than two. In Afghanistan, World Bank statistics suggest it is about 6.7 children per woman.
Fiscal Policy	The use by a government of its expenditures on goods and services and/or tax collections to influence the level of national income. In all countries the government is the largest single actor in the economy, so how it decides to buy or spend will have a big effect on the economy.

Foreign Aid	The international transfer of public and private funds in the form of loans or grants from donor countries to recipient countries. A grant is money that does not have to be repaid. Loans must be paid back, but their terms may vary. Aid became a big part of the international economy in the 1960s, as many countries in Africa and Asia became independent for the first time. See also: "loans".
Free Market Economy	The main economic system in the world after the collapse of communism. In a free market economy, most property is held by private individuals rather than the government, and prices are whatever a buyer and seller agree, rather than being set by the government.
GDP	One of the main measures used by economists to gauge how a country is performing economically. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is the total value of all goods and services produced over a given time period (usually a year) excluding net property income from abroad. It can be measured either as the total of income, expenditure or output. See also: "GNP".
GNP	Gross National Product (GNP) is a measure of economic activity. It is the total value of all goods and services produced over a given time period (usually a year) including net property income from abroad. It can be measured either as the total of income, expenditure or output.
Hard Currency	A currency of an industrialised country that has general convertibility. In many developing countries governments try to fix exchange rates between national and foreign currencies. In other countries, like Afghanistan, the local currency can be freely converted into major world currencies like the dollar or the euro or the yen, but it does not have wide recognition in the world at large.
HIV	Human Immune Deficiency Virus, the virus that causes AIDS.
Illiteracy	The proportion of the population over the age of fifteen who cannot, with understanding, read and write a simple statement about their everyday life and do simple mathematical calculations. Afghanistan has one of the highest illiteracy rates in the world. As many as 80% of men and 90% of women cannot read or write. The women's rate is higher, because they have less access to education than men.
Industrialisation	The process of expanding a country's capacity to produce secondary goods and services. Many less-developed countries (LDCs), noticing that Europe and North America became rich from industry, have tried to move from being agricultural to industrial economies as fast as possible.
Infant Mortality Rate	The number of children who die before the age of five years, typically measured out of every 1000 live births. The World Bank estimates that Afghanistan had an infant mortality rate of about 279 in 2000, compared to 114 as the average in all low income countries.

Informal Sector	The exchange of goods and services not accurately recorded in government figures and accounting. The informal economy, which is generally untaxed, commonly includes goods and services including day care, tutoring, or black market exchanges. The informal sector is usually made up of small companies and is often the most dynamic part of an economy.
Inflation	The rise in general prices and the reduction in value of money. Inflation is a sustained increase in the general price level. In other words it is the rate at which prices are increasing. It can be measured either monthly, quarterly or annually. In many countries, it is measured by a Consumer Price Index, where the prices of a fixed range of normal household goods are compared. Hyperinflation is when inflation reaches over 50% a month. Inflation is bad for economic development, because it makes planning difficult and leaves most people in a constant struggle to make ends meet.
Infrastructure	The underlying assets of an economy that in normal circumstances are taken for granted as the basis for economic activity. Roads, for example, or the electricity and water networks.
Interest	The payment made for the use of funds to create capital goods with.
Investment	Investment is money spent on acquiring capital goods, such as machinery and equipment. The term can also refer to money given by one company or individual to a company to receive a share of ownership of the company. See also: "equity".
Less Developed Countries, LDC	Countries who are generally characterised by low levels of GDP and income per head. LDCs usually have a heavy dependence on the primary sector of the economy. In the case of Afghanistan this is true with dependence on agriculture. Within the general category of LDCs, there are low income countries and middle income countries. Afghanistan is a low income country. The World Bank defined low income countries as those with national income of less than \$755 or less in 1999. There are currently about 64 low income countries. Their combined population is more than 2.4 billion.
Life Expectancy	The average number of years newborn babies can be expected to live based on current health conditions. This indicator reflects environmental conditions in a country, the health of its people, the quality of care they receive when they are sick, and their living conditions. According to the World Bank, Afghanistan has a life expectancy of 43 years, compared to an average of 58.9 years in low income countries.
Loans, hard and soft	Money lent by one party to another with the expectation of repayment. Loans can be divided into soft loans and hard loans. Many developing governments are offered soft loans where interest rates are below what a private company would have to pay in the marketplace. Loans are controversial in international economics because many LDC governments suffer from debt and believe they should not have to pay back past loans.

Marginal Cost	The amount spent on producing one extra unit. The marginal cost is the increase in total cost when one more unit is produced. For example, say a bakery is producing 1000 loaves of bread a day, the marginal cost is how much extra it will cost to produce one more loaf of bread. Marginal cost is important because it changes drastically at different levels of production. If the marginal cost of each unit is going down, then there is an economy of scale, whereas if it is going up, there is a diminishing rate of return.
Macroeconomics	The branch of economic theory concerned with the economy as a whole. Macroeconomics is concerned with things like inflation, exchange and interest rates and government policies. See also: "microeconomics".
Microeconomics	The branch of economic theory concerned with how things work for individual people or companies.
Monopolistic Competition	A monopoly is where one company is able to dominate the market for the good or product it is selling, setting its price as it likes. In a monopoly there is little or no competition from other firms. Monopolies are often associated with political or economic power - a government or ruler may give a monopoly in trade of a certain good to an ally. Monopolies are the most extreme example of lack of competition and are quite rare. But markets are frequently dominated by oligarchies or cartels - very small numbers of companies who fix prices between themselves.
Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)	NGOs, or Non-Governmental Organisations, is a term mainly applied to groups involved in economic development or humanitarian assistance which are not owned or controlled by any government - although a lot of NGOs get a lot of their funding from government sources. Some NGOs such as Amnesty International or Medecins Sans Frontieres are huge and global. Others are just based in one village or community. The largest NGO, the Red Cross, has 105 million members. In conflict situations NGOs are often the biggest single economic sector, because government has collapsed and conditions are too violent and uncertain for private business to flourish. NGOs have been major players in Afghanistan since the Soviet invasion of 1979.
Opportunity Cost	One measure of the cost or value of any product or activity is to compare it with the next best option. For example, the opportunity cost in a poor family of sending a child to university might not just be the actual money spent on education but also the loss of income compared to if that child had got a job instead.

Parastatals	Large state-owned industrial enterprises. In many developing countries parastatals date from the first stages of independence, when many governments adopted socialist-style economic policies. Afghanistan developed a few parastatal companies such as a car assembly plant in Kabul and cement works and mills in Pul-e Khumri in the 1960s and 1970s, but the war has meant they have played little part in the economy recently. Parastatals are often very inefficient economically, and there are debates about whether they can be reformed, or sold to private business, or whether they should be closed down altogether, even if that means high unemployment.
Population Growth Rate	The increase in a country's population during one year, divided by the population at the start of that year. It reflects the number of births and deaths during the period and the number of people moving to and from a country. The average annual population growth rates for a number of years provide a better picture than do rates for a single year. In 1997, total world population was more than 5.8 billion, and the average world population growth rate between 1980 and 1997 was 1.6 per cent per year. Some poorer countries have growth rates of over 4 per cent per year, meaning their population will double every 20 years. Many economists believe high population growth rate places too much pressure on economic resources in poor countries, leading to poverty, lack of health and education services and so on.
Poverty Line	A person is considered poor if his income level falls below some minimum level necessary to meet basic needs. This minimum level is usually called the "poverty line". What is necessary to satisfy basic needs varies across time and societies. Information is obtained through surveys conducted regularly in most countries. For the purpose of global comparison, the World Bank uses reference lines set at \$1 and \$2 per day in 1993 Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) terms. It has been estimated that in 1998, 1.2 billion people world-wide had consumption levels below \$1 a day - 24 per cent of the population of the developing world - and 2.8 billion lived on less than \$2 a day. Figures for Afghanistan are not available, but it is believed that a high proportion of the population live below this poverty line.
Primary Industry	That part of the economy concerned with agriculture and the extraction of raw materials. Farmers and miners, for example, are engaged in primary industry. See also: "secondary industry" and "tertiary industry".
Primary Education	Education to a level of basic literacy. A student who has been through primary education should be able to write a simple letter, read newspapers and calculate simple sums. Making primary education available to all is thought to be a major stimulant of economic development and one of the main elements in building human capital.

Primary Health Care	Health services, including family planning, clean water supply, sanitation, immunization, and nutrition education, that are designed to be cost-effective in poor countries. Primary health care means clinics in villages, for example, and vaccination campaigns, rather than sophisticated hospitals and treatment facilities.
Property Rights	The clearly acknowledged rights to ownership of an asset such as land. Economic growth is impossible without ownership of property being recognised and unchallenged by all. In Afghanistan property rights have been disrupted by the war, and there are tens of thousands of cases where ownership of land is disputed between different parties.
Purchasing Power Parity	A method of measuring the relative purchasing power of different countries' currencies over the same types of goods and services. Purchasing power parity was developed as a more accurate way to measure poverty and wealth across different countries, because things often cost less in poor countries. For example, in Kabul a loaf of bread costs 5 US cents and a hair cut costs 50 US cents, whereas in London the bread costs \$1 and the haircut \$10. This means that someone in Afghanistan might enjoy the same purchasing power with five times less money in absolute terms.
Quota	Limits on the amount of a good produced, imported, exported or offered for sale. Quotas are imposed by governments, either singly or as a group, and either on imports coming in from abroad or on their own industry. Arguments over quotas are often a reason for trade disputes between countries.
Rational Behaviour	Modern economics is based on the idea that people in any given situation will behave more or less logically given their own perceptions of the situation. For example, no one will buy exactly the same product at a higher rather than a lower price. This rational behaviour is not dependent on levels of intelligence or education. Modern economics assumes that everyone in every situation acts rationally in their own self-interest as they perceive it.
Rural-Urban Migration	The migration of people from rural areas to urban areas. One of the biggest problems in many developing countries, this leads to overcrowding of the cities, high unemployment and other social problems. Until recently, Afghanistan suffered less rural-urban migration than many other countries, but after the end of the Taliban government, over 1.5 million refugees returned from abroad, mainly into towns and cities.
Secondary Industry	That part of the economy concerned with the processing of goods out of their raw state. For example, if a farmer grows tomatoes as primary industry, a canning factory might make tomato juice.

Staple Food	Most countries have traditionally had a main food consumed by a large proportion of the population, because it is relatively cheap and filling. In Afghanistan rice and bread are both staple foods, and many poor people survive on very little else. Staple foods are very sensitive politically - a government will often provide a subsidy to keep prices in the staple cheap and risks major unrest if there are price rises.
Structural Adjustment Programmes	A set of economic policies that governments implement when they are undergoing economic reforms. Organisations giving or lending money to an LDC often specify that a government must carry out a structural adjustment programme to qualify for aid.
Subsidies	Money given to producers to reduce costs hence the market price of a good or service. Either the buyer or the seller of the good is important enough that a government feels it is necessary to shield them from the true market price of the good. In industrial Western countries farmers are often subsidised, because farmers are considered important. In poor countries the price of staple foods is subsidised to shield the consumer.
Subsistence Farming	Farming to grow crops or raise livestock mainly for local use. If, for example, a farming village mainly consumes what it grows and sends relatively little to market, it is living off subsistence farming. Apart from poppies and wheat, most farming in Afghanistan is subsistence farming. War, the destruction of the road network, and the lack of electricity have made it difficult for farmers to get their goods to market before they rot.
Sustainable Development	Sustainable development is one of the most important and controversial ideas in international economics today. It is defined as achieving economic growth in a way which can go on forever. Much traditional industry, for example, which fuelled prosperity in Western countries, is based on high consumption of energy sources like oil and coal, which are not renewable - ie, only available in limited quantities - and also pollute the atmosphere. Some industries like forestry and fishing are particularly sensitive now, because they are seen to be depleting limited natural resources.
Tertiary Industry	That part of the economy concerned with the provision of services, above and beyond the manufacture of goods. If a farmer growing tomatoes is primary industry, and a manufacturer making juice out of the tomatoes is secondary industry, then a company which sold the cans of juice to different shops, or provided information about the prices of rival products of tomato juice to the manufacturing company would be involved in tertiary industry.
Tied Aid	Aid that is given on the condition that the recipient country uses the funds to purchase goods and services from the donor country. A lot of aid has been tied, but many economists now argue that tying aid makes it less effective.

Trade Liberalisation	The removal of barriers to trade such as import quotas and tariffs. In the 1980s and 1990s, trade liberalisation accelerated around the world with international agreements between over 150 countries to apply uniform standards of tariffs and trades between each other. The World Trade Organisation, based in Geneva, currently leads efforts to increase trade liberalisation.
Underemployment	A situation where people are working less than they would like to. Many people in poorer countries are underemployed rather than being unemployed: a farmer, for example, who only works part of the year on his land but is unable to find work at other times of the year. In cities people who work part time are often underemployed.
Unemployment	The condition in which members of the labour force are without jobs. Unemployment is sometimes used more broadly to refer to the waste of resources when the economy is operating at less than its full potential. In many industrial countries the unemployment rate is very sensitive politically.

Answers Section

Exercise 1

There are no right or wrong answers to this exercise, but it is interesting that Person A has different motivations from Person B. Person A is clearly focused on the outside world and so should try to develop a career in international journalism. Person B on the other hand would do better to specialise in national journalism.

Exercise 4

1) *Afghanistan is trying to recover from 23 years of war and suffers from widespread poverty and social problems.* No.

2) *Pakistan helped Afghan refugees when they first arrived after the Soviet invasion of 1980. But in recent years, Pakistan has interfered in Afghanistan's internal affairs.* Yes, this statement needs a source as it is controversial. Pakistanis would not agree that they had been interfering.

3) *Getting the right balance between Afghanistan's different ethnic groups has always been an important part of forming any government in the country.* No. People dispute whether different governments have actually achieved this, but it is not controversial that it is important to do so.

4) *Getting the right balance between Afghanistan's different ethnic groups has always been an important part of forming any government in the country. In particular, the Pashtoon majority need to be adequately represented.* Yes. The proportions of different ethnic groups inside Pakistan are controversial. Many Pashtoon believe they are a majority (over 50%) of all Afghans. Other groups and some official estimates disagree.

5) *Herat lies almost 800 km to the west of Kabul. It takes two or three days to get there by road.* No. These figures and distances are not disputed.

Exercise 5

1) *A European diplomat said negotiations between the two sides have broken down over the issue of refugees.*

2) *A presidential spokesman said Karzai is anxious to control the warlords soon.*

3) *The price of sugar has risen by 50% in the last six months, a trader in the market said.*

Exercise 9

1) *Lots of Afghan children are dying during childbirth, because there are no medical facilities for their mothers. This is especially the case outside*

Kabul and the major cities. ISSUE: Unfortunately, this has been the constant situation for many years - there is nothing new in it.

2) *The government has sent soldiers down to guard the major trade routes with Pakistan in order to catch traders who are bringing goods across the border without paying customs duties.* STORY

3) *Afghanistan's education ministry has raised \$10 million through launching an appeal for contributions from the public.* STORY

4) *Many Afghans who have returned to the country this year are finding life difficult.* On balance, ISSUE, although for an international newspaper which doesn't have very many stories from Afghanistan, it could be a feature rather than a news story.

5) *Some Afghan refugees who returned to Kabul this year have protested outside the municipality because of crowded living conditions.* STORY

Exercise 10

"Mithalistan's Finance Ministry says it is happy customs duties collected from tobacco will go up this year, even though the government is still clearly collecting less than 30 percent of the total due. The ministry said in a statement it would collect \$25 million this year in tobacco taxes, up from \$20 million last year. But according to the government's own figures, the total would actually be \$91 million if all cigarettes were sold legally."

The mathematics: Five million smokers each generate five US cents per day in tobacco taxes, or \$250,000. Over a year of 365 days, that adds up to \$91.25 million. The ministry may be trying to conceal the fact that it is still not collecting most of the money due by comparing this year's taxes collected with last year's.

Exercise 11

Inflation is falling because the central bank is printing more money.

WRONG. The government printing money is one of the key causes of inflation.

The trade deficit is falling because the afghan has depreciated.

WRONG. If the local currency decreases in value against foreign currencies, it means it will take more afghanis to import the same amount of goods. This means the trade deficit - the gap between money spent on imports and money earned on exports - will rise.

Wages have fallen so employment has risen.

CORRECT. Falling wages mean more employers can afford to take on workers instead of investing their money somewhere else.

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