

Speeches, News Conferences and Meetings

- **Preparing for the speech story**
 - Be sure you have the right person.
 - Contact the group sponsoring the speech and ask for the topic.
 - Check your newspaper library for background on the speaker.
 - If the speech is important enough, contact the speaker for a brief interview.
- **Preparing for the news conference**
 - Get up-to-date background on the person holding the news conference.
 - Learn why the conference is being held.
 - Check out any rumors beforehand; call the person's associates, friends or secretary.
 - Try to arrange an interview before or after the news conference.
- **Preparing for the meeting story**
 - Contact some of the key figures
 - Try to find out what the meeting is about. You can then study and investigate issues before arriving.

- **Achieving total coverage of content and event**
 - Get the content correct. Recorders can be helpful, but always take good notes. Quote people exactly and in context.
 - Note the background, personal characteristics and mannerisms of the main participants.
 - Cover the event. Look around the edges—at the audience (size, reactions) and sometimes at what is happening outside the building.
 - Get there early, position yourself and hang around afterward.
- **Using a digital recorder**
 - Be familiar with the machine. Practice using it. Make sure you understand its peculiarities. Check its sound capabilities.
 - Set it where you can see that it's working. If it has a digital counter, note the number when you hear a quote you want.
 - Take notes as if the recorder might not be working. After all, it might not be.

- **Covering the event**

- Be sure to record what the digital recorder misses—gestures, and facial expressions.
- Remember that a person's words often must be measured against his or her background.
- Take note of the tone of questions.
- Note the size of the audience.

- **Five ways to master the meeting story**

- Arrive early.
- Prepare your questions.
- Listen to other's questions.
- Pursue what is newsworthy.
- Don't rush off. Some of the best stories happen afterward.

- Remember, two of the criteria for news are that it be relevant or useful. Another is that it be interesting.

- Finally, you are always expected to write well—even for a common event like a speech, news conference or meeting