

BEAT REPORTING



What is a **BEAT**?

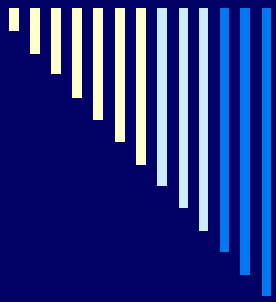
- *Specific areas covered regularly by a specific reporter*

 - TYPICAL BEATS INCLUDE:
 - City & County Government
 - Education
 - Police
 - Religion
 - Science/Environment/Medicine
 - Business
 - Sports
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Beat Reporters

- A good reporter is:
 - Familiar with general background
 - Knows specific language of area
 - Asks right questions
 - Recognizes newsworthy info
 - Writes understandable stories for unfamiliar readers
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- Beat Story Ideas
 - Regular coverage
 - Journalist enterprise—often more in-depth

- Beat reporters tell audiences not only what is happening, but how to get involved.



How to cover a BEAT:

- **Be Prepared**
 - Research background & talk to sources
 - **Be Alert**
 - Know who will benefit from coverage
 - Note who is for & against it
 - **Be Persistent**
 - Insist on clear answers
 - Follow-up slow developments
 - **Be There**
 - No substitute for personal contact
 - **Be Accurate**
 - Reflective listen and clarify
 - **Be Wary**
 - You are a reporter not participant
 - Write for readers not sources
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Reporting Tips

- Beat reporting is like gardening...news is cultivated & grows slowly
 - Regular follow-up
 - Don't give up!

 - Building Relationships:
 - Build goodwill
 - Don't shun good news
 - Protect sources if necessary

 - Ask questions...
 - Does it make sense to me?
 - How can I make sense to my readers?
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Writing for Readers

- **Translate**
 - Make technical, specialized language clear
 - **Make your writing human**
 - State how information will impact real people
 - **Think of the public pocket book**
 - Find out how much it cost the public
 - **Get out of the office**
 - Go where news is happening
 - Don't rely on other accounts (web, reports, etc.)
 - **Ask the readers' questions**
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Practical Principles for Beat Reporters

- Information is Power
 - Money is key
 - The budget is the blueprint
 - Distributing power and money is politics
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