

News Reports

TV Newscast Clip/Magazine Article on  *MediaSmart DVD*

What's the SOURCE?

KEY IDEA Recall a time you watched a TV news report in which someone was making statements to a reporter. What was the circumstance? Did the statements appear to be ones you could trust? In news reporting, it's not just the events that matter but what people have to say about them. In this lesson, you'll see how quotes can help you fully understand a news event.

Background

Fireworks in Space July 4, 2005, was a day of celebration at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). As part of a major mission called "Deep Impact," NASA launched a space probe that hit a comet so hard, it burrowed through its surface—then exploded. Scientists and engineers cheered as the probe's nearby mother ship transmitted images of the spectacular event. NASA realized it had gathered a wealth of scientific data about the comet that would help in future research.

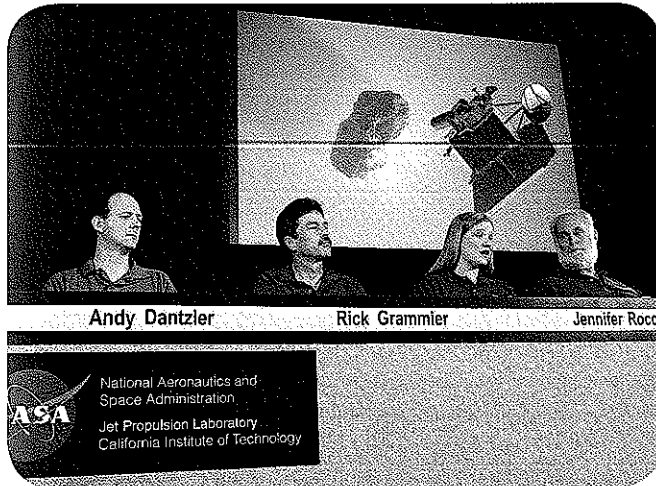
To explore how news reporters gather and support their facts, you'll watch a TV newscast and read a magazine article that cover this remarkable event.



Media Literacy: Sources in the News

In the world of news, a **source** is a person who provides information for a news report. A reporter usually uses one or more sources while creating a news report. In printed news, the reporter includes **quotations**, the words spoken by the sources to the reporter. In a TV or radio newscast, the quoted statements are called **sound bites**, which are edited from interviews with the sources. Here are the types of sources usually quoted in the news.

TYPES OF SOURCES

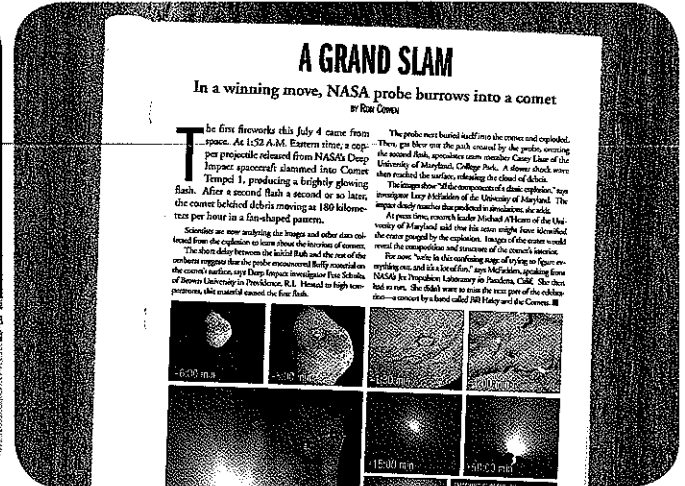


Witnesses

These are the people who are present at the time of an event or who are directly affected by it.

Officials

These sources are authority figures, those who represent the government, a business, and so on.



Experts

Often experts are quoted after an event occurs. They're qualified to share their knowledge about what happened.

Sources as Counterpoints

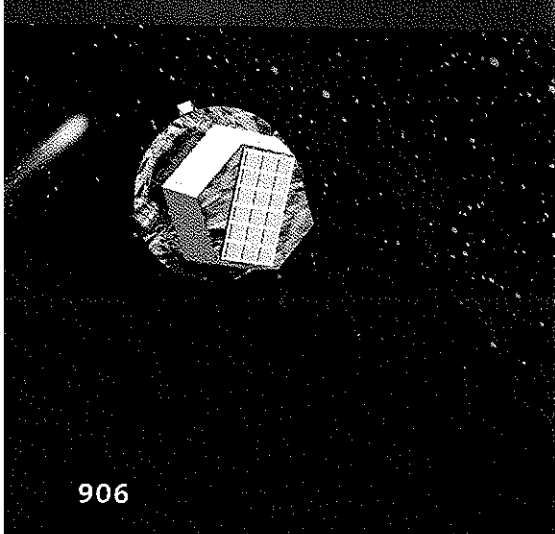
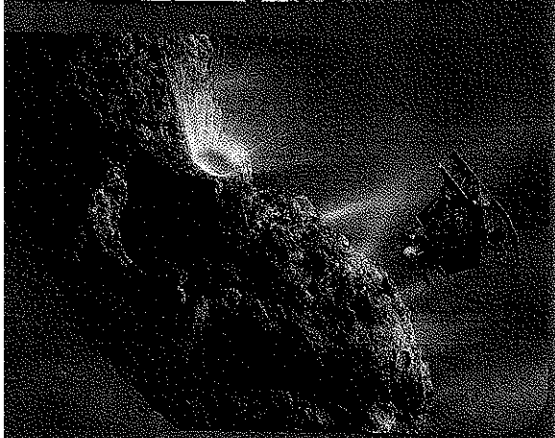
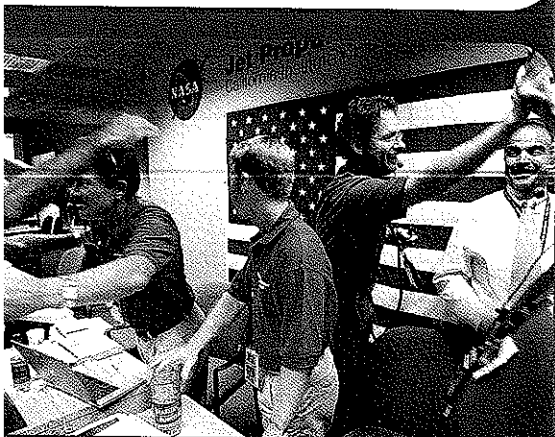
One source may give one side of an event or an issue. In the same report, another source may have a very different view.

STRATEGIES FOR ANALYZING SOURCES

- Identify a source by name and determine his or her role.
- Question why a source is included in a news report. Ask yourself: What is this source helping me to understand about the event?
- Be aware that what you're hearing or reading is not the entire interview. Think about how the sound bites or quotations support certain facts.
- In reports that include countering or opposing sources, check to see that the two sides are **balanced** or are represented equally. It's important that a news report be neutral and fair to all sides.

MediaSmart DVD

- **News Format 1:** "Deep Impact"
- **Reporter:** Bill Whitaker
- **Genre:** TV newscast
- **Running Time:** 2.5 minutes
- **News Format 2:** "A Grand Slam"
- **Reporter:** Ron Cowen
- **Genre:** Magazine article



Viewing Guide for News Reports

You'll watch the CBS network news report that first aired at the time of the event. Then you'll read an article that appeared a few days later in the weekly newsmagazine *Science News*. As you examine each one, look for the people who make statements. Take notes about the sources or about any striking feature of each format. Answer these questions to help analyze the news reports.

NOW VIEW

FIRST VIEWING: Comprehension

1. **Clarify** NASA had created an animated model, or simulation, of the comet explosion. According to the TV newscast, what makes the simulation remarkable?
2. **Recall** Which one of the sources is an investigator from Brown University?

CLOSE VIEWING: Media Literacy

3. **Analyze TV Sources** In the "Deep Impact" news report, each **sound bite** is included after a certain amount of factual information is presented. Why do you think the news report is edited in this way?
4. **Analyze Print Sources** The sources who are quoted in the magazine article are quoted directly or are **paraphrased**. This means the reporter has restated what he was told in his own words. In a science-related article, why might he have chosen to paraphrase?
5. **Compare News Sources** Use a chart like this to identify and compare the types of sources of both news reports.

Sources

"Deep Impact"

"A Grand Slam"

Write or Discuss

Evaluate Sources You encountered a number of sources in the TV newscast and in the magazine article. Now choose one of the news reports and make your own statement. In a short paragraph, tell how effectively you think the sources are used. Consider:

- what types of individuals are used as sources
- your basic impressions of these sources
- what the sources helped you to understand in the news report

Produce Your Own Media

Create an Interview Plan In small groups, brainstorm at least three possible news stories to cover in your school or neighborhood. Once these are determined, imagine you're a team of reporters preparing to interview different sources for the news reports. Use your ideas to help you create an **interview plan**. This plan will help you to determine the most likely people to contact for an interview. It can also help you prepare interview questions.

HERE'S HOW To help you devise your interview plan, use these tips.

- For this planning stage, list the possible sources. Jot down a detail that describes that person's connection to the news story.
- For each source, jot down questions that you think would clearly relate to the news story.
- Try to create questions that are open-ended. The best sound bites start with questions like these. Avoid questions that lead to a simple "yes" or "no" response.

STUDENT MODEL

<i>Possible News Stories:</i>
• the opening of a school's time capsule from 1990
• the new neighborhood garden project
<i>Sources:</i>
Mr. Camacho—He originally installed the time capsule.
Ms. Evans—School principal
Tara Sebring and Jamal Humphrey—They've assembled a new capsule.
<i>Possible Questions:</i>
• Why now for opening the capsule?
• Will there be some sort of ceremony to mark the opening?
• What does the new capsule contain?



MEDIA TOOLS

For help with creating a interview plan, visit the **Media Center** at ClassZone.com.

Tech Tip

If available, record your interview plans as electronic files.