

THE
SITUATION ROOM
★ ★ ★ EXPERIENCE

HOW TO READ A DOCUMENT

HOW TO READ A MEMORANDUM

Correspondence within the government is often formatted like the following example. This worksheet will help you understand how to read all parts of this type of correspondence to prepare for the Situation Room Experience.

NOTE: Text like "Confidential" that denotes the level of secrecy around a message

4535

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

July 1, 1983

CONFIDENTIAL

ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR: WILLIAM P. CLARK

THROUGH: CHARLES P. TYSON

FROM: PAULA DOBRIANSKY

SUBJECT: Request for Presidential Photo Opportunity: European Parliament President Piet Dankert

State has forwarded a memorandum (Tab II) requesting that a photo opportunity be granted with the President for European Parliament President Piet Dankert early in November. As this would be Dankert's first official visit to the U.S. since his election as President of the European Parliament on February 19, 1982, I recommend that this request be given favorable consideration. A Schedule Proposal is attached at Tab I.

Al Myer concurs.

RECOMMENDATION

That you forward the Schedule Proposal at Tab I.

Approve _____ Disapprove _____

Attachments:

Tab I Schedule Proposal
Tab II State memorandum, June 29, 1983

cc: Jack Matlock
Peter Sommer

Declassified
Sec 34(b), E.O. 12958, as amended
White House Guidelines, Sept. 11, 2008
BY NARA, On: 03/12/10

CONFIDENTIAL
Declassify on: OADR

Find sender, receiver, subject, etc. here

The main message

Notification of additional attachments to the message

Recipient approves/disapproves a suggestion

Note the "declassified" stamp that makes the document available for the public to read

HOW TO WATCH A NEWS REPORT

TIPS:

- Television is a visual medium. Watch the report once without the sound. Evaluate the images. Read the titles and text. Predict the content and tone of the report.
- Watch the report with the sound. Listen carefully to vocal inflection as well as content.

Example of a Breaking News report:

<http://www.wjla.com/articles/2015/04/breaking-news-protesters-throwing-bricks-near-baltimore-mall-met-by-police-in-riot-gear-113555.html>

1. Take notes as you watch the news report shown in class or a report at home. Add in any questions or comments that you have at any point in the report:

2. Who created the report? Do you think that any bias was shown in the report?

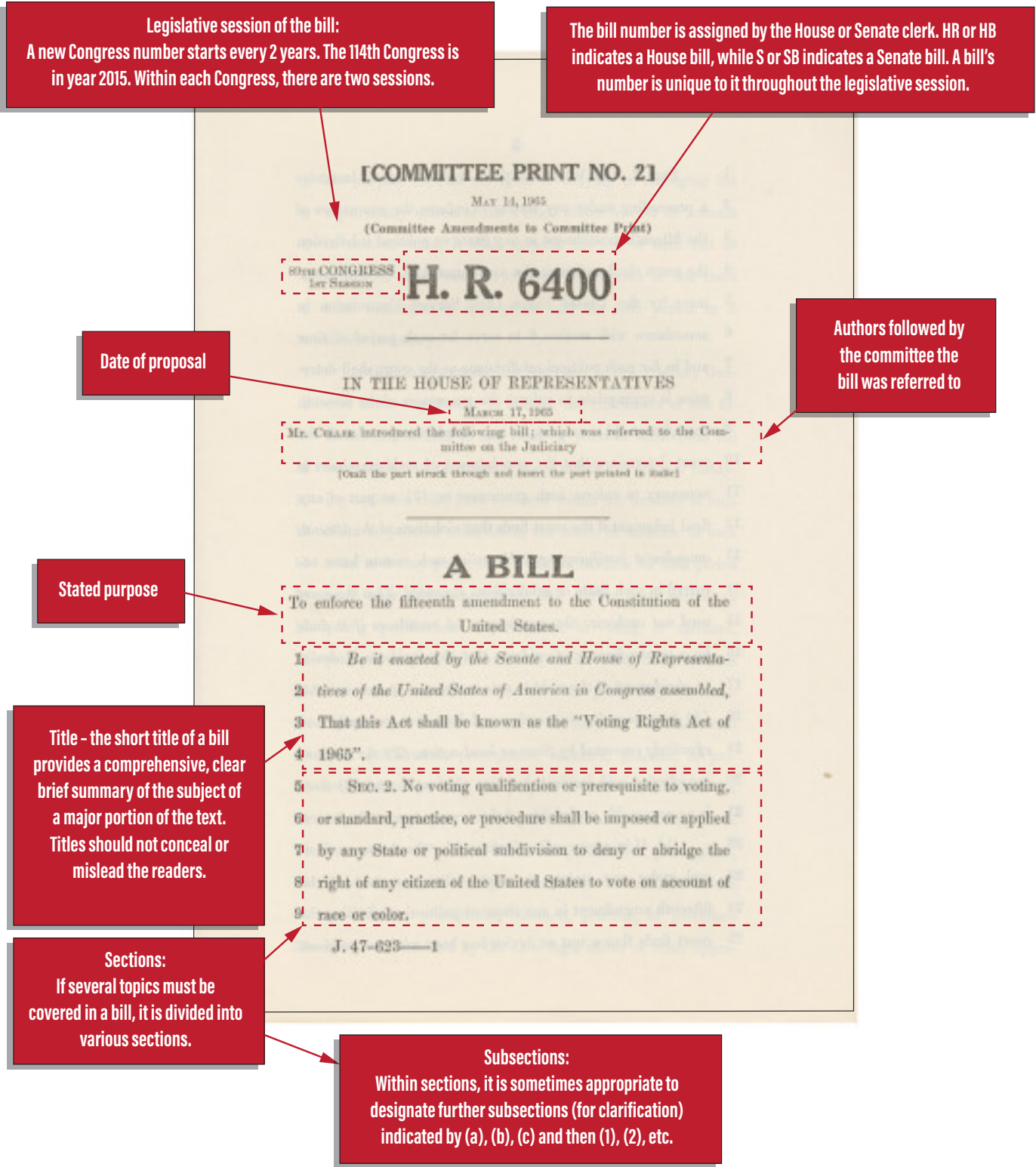
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

The term "Breaking News" means you are meant to be watching new information about an event that is happening right now.

1. Summarize the "Breaking News" report you just watched.
2. Did the reporter accurately reflect what was happening in the background?
3. Did you bring previous knowledge or preconceived ideas to your experience? Did this influence your experience of the material?
4. What are the differences between a breaking news broadcast and a pre-recorded report? What might change in the images, content, situation, and level of impact of each?
5. What were some of your emotions while watching the video, and what prompted them?
6. Do you think the report was one-sided or did it explain differing viewpoints on the situation?
7. What two or more questions would you like to ask about the situation you just watched unfold?

HOW TO READ A BILL

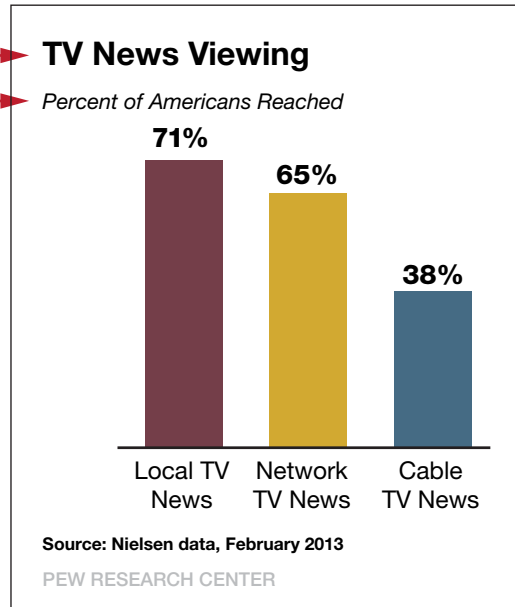
Bill – proposed law, amendment to a law, or amendment to the Constitution



HOW TO READ TABLES AND CHARTS

Know what is being measured: look at the graph title, x & y axis, and other labels or keys to familiarize yourself with the content

Look for sub-categories or keys that allow for further analysis of graph or chart data. For example, the color coding in these two graphs allows for easier differentiation, and the sub-categories of heavy, light, and medium TV viewers in minutes watched per day clarifies meaning in the second graph.

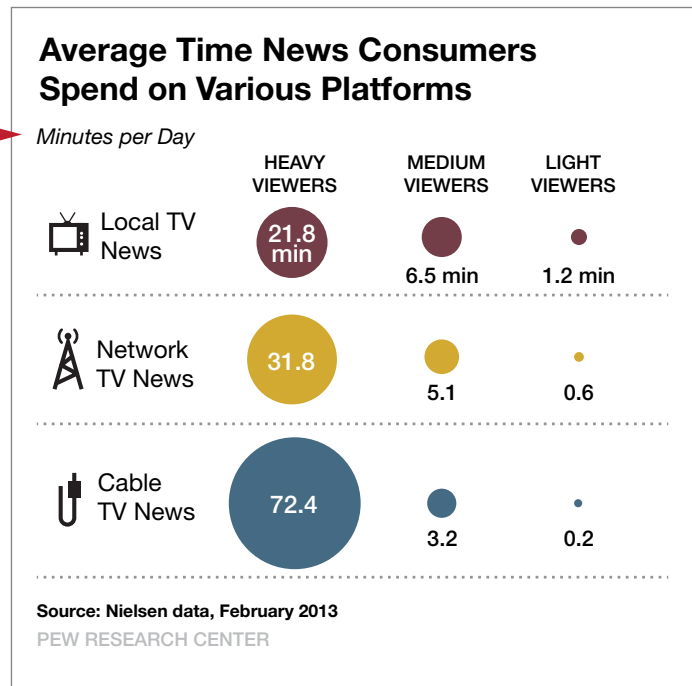


What are the units used in measurement? (Hours versus minutes is a big difference!)

Test your graph reading skills:

Can you state one data piece from the graph?
Example: Heavy TV viewers for Local TV News watch about 21.8 minutes of it per day.

Look for short-term and long-term trends or surprising data to make inferences and generalizations.
(Does anything double or show dramatic change? What could have caused this?)



HOW TO READ A CABLE

Cable - the term given to a confidential message.

