

THE REPORTER'S FORMULA

Every reporter knows that readers care about six things when they read a newspaper article. These six questions can help **any** writer know where to begin. The reporter's formula is:

WHO? WHAT? WHEN? WHERE? WHY? HOW?

Here's a sample of how to apply the writer's formula to a topic.

TOPIC: Should the government be allowed to censor the Internet for racist content?

- WHO?** Who is hurt by racist content on the Internet?
Who benefits from it?
Who would decide what content is considered racist?
- WHAT?** What would be considered racist?
What effects would censoring racist content on the Internet have?
(i.e. would it lead to litigation on freedom of speech issues, would other types of media be used to convey the same info, etc.)
- WHEN?** When would the government be allowed to begin censoring the Internet?
When and how often would they search out offenders?
- WHERE?** Where would the group of censors be located?
- WHY?** Why would censoring racist content on the Internet be positive?
Why would it be detrimental?
Why would we want to go to the trouble?
Why is it the American government's job to censor a world-wide information source?
- HOW?** How would we keep up with the vast amount of information going on the Internet every day?
How would we decide what content should be considered racist?