

Fact-checking protocol for JOUR 320 out-of-class story assignments

Here is what you must do on every out-of-class story assignment to ensure its accuracy. Stories that do not follow this fact-checking protocol will be returned to you and recorded as an Incomplete until you complete these steps.

Step one: report accurately

- Save any background documents that you use for your story in a digital folder that identifies them as files for this class. This should include typed notes from interviews.
- Record any interview you do or meetings that you cover. **Remember to ask for permission to record the interview.** You may use the free, basic [Otter voice transcription app](#), or another tool you prefer that transcribes the audio. Be prepared to share this file with your instructor.
- Email interviews are typically **not as effective as in-person or phone interviews** and are therefore discouraged. However, if a source will only answer your questions via email, save those emails in the file folder you create for this class.

Step two: check the facts

- Print out your story and underline every fact, including every proper name and title, every city and road name, and every age.
- Double-check every fact against your notes or other sources to ensure that it is correct.
- Make sure that second references correspond with your spelling of their first references.

Step three: add links

- **Every fact** needs to be **linked** to its source, if possible. Include URLs if you are attributing a fact to an online document, and include a link to an Otter or other audio file for every fact that you garnered through an interview.
- **Every quote** needs to be **linked** to its source if possible. For quotes from an interview recorded on Otter, please include the approximate time stamp in the recording when the source uttered the quote you are using – and please give your instructor access to your Otter file. Emails that you quoted should be stored on a Google Doc and shared with your instructor. If a quote came from a speech or press release, save that in your story folder as well.
- **Every human** whom you quote or cite as a source needs an email address **and/or** phone number and (if relevant) URL.
- **Every entity, organization and government office** named in the story needs a link to the official organization website. **If material beyond the organization name is used, link to the website page for the material, or provide contact information (email and/or phone number) for the source consulted.**

Step four: include a source list

- At the bottom of your story, you must include a list of every source you spoke with or got quotes from via email, along with each person's email address and, if possible, phone number.
- Failure to include a source list will result in your grade on the assignment being dropped one letter grade.