

GATHERING NEWS INFORMATION (WATS Reports)

1. The following information must be included for an accurate report.

W H A T

W H E R E

( Don't be afraid to ask  
questions! )

W H E N

W H O

W H Y

H O W

This means: names, ages, dates, locations, background, organizational affiliation, etc.

All interpretative statements (not specific facts) should be attributed to someone.

2. Summarize the incident or subject of report in the opening sentence.  
Use a short headline where possible.

s a m p l e: WATS report. July 3, 1964 Taken by Supersnick.

Baertown, Miss. (Amite Co.) YOUTHS BEATEN Geo Pye  
Three SNCC workers were beaten by city police June 2.  
John Jones, 19 (McComb), Joe Smith, 21 (Jackson), and  
Bill Hall, 23 (white volunteer - Milwaukee, Wisc.)  
were accosted about 20 minutes after leaving ....

Headlining will simplify use of compiled reports, especially where an incident is followed several days. It should be possible to flip through successive pages of WATS reports and find needed data without having to read lengthy reports in full.

If you are writing in paragraph form, think about underlining summarizing statements and important data.

Special information should be indented in some way so it stands out.

3. Distinguishing phrases must be used. There is a difference between being shot at and being shot and being shot down; between being hit with fists and beaten with blackjacks; between being taken into custody and being arrested; between city, county and state police.



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