# What Are Under-Reported Stories, and How Can You Find Them?

## Objective: You will be able to...

- Evaluate how you get their news, what stories you seek, why news is important, and questions you have about how the news is made
- Define the term "under-reported story" and describe examples of these stories
- Analyze how under-reported stories are different from other news stories and why they matter
- Evaluate how under-reported stories connect to issues you see in their communities, and brainstorm under-reported issues in their communities
- Practice methods for identifying and analyzing under-reported stories by evaluating news and conducting your own research.

## Warm-up:

1. **Brainstorm a definition for the word "news" below**. How does your definition compare to the dictionary definition below?

> News is a source of information that gives a report of the facts and details of an event in order to inform the people viewing. It often covers events that occurred in the area in which one lives or it can be presented on various scales such as locally, globally, or nationally. News is portrayed and spread in newspapers, on tv, etc. and more recently, our phones and the internet. The news isn't always not always trustworthy due to biased opinions on outlooks and the fact that people have control over what gets shown to the public. My definition is pretty spot on since the actual definition states news can be primarily defined as "a report of recent events".

### Definition of *news*

**1** **a** : a report of recent events
   **//** gave her the good *news*

   **b** : previously unknown information
   **//** I've got *news* for you

   **c** : something having a specified influence or effect
   **//** the rain was good *news* for lawns and gardens
   — Garrison Keillor
   **//** the virus was bad *news*

**2** **a** : material reported in a newspaper or news periodical or on a newscast
   **//** listened to the *news* on the radio

   **b** : matter that is newsworthy
   **//** The layoffs were big *news* in this part of the state.

2. How do you get most of your news? **Highlight all that apply.**

- <mark>Newspapers/magazines</mark>
- <mark>TV</mark>
- <mark>Internet/apps</mark>
- <mark>Radio</mark>
- Other

3. News outlets publish their news using all the different methods above. **Make a list:**

Which news outlets (newspapers, tv shows, websites, etc.) do you check to get your news?

- Channel 8
- News app on Iphone
- Instagram
- Google
- Youtube
- CNN
a. Compare your answers with this list from the Pew Research Center of the most widely read news websites in 2010! What are examples of stories you would see on the news? **Write a few below**.

- Some news stories cover individual or personal stories of citizens on a popular event or current event in order to get their thoughts and a citizens view on the matter. For example, some news channels have covered families that have lost family members to Covid-19 and usually they advise people to wear masks or remind them how serious the pandemic is and how it's affecting people everyday.
- Some news stories cover breaking news which is usually news that could cause harm or affect the citizens within the area in which they live and where the event happened. Oftentimes, it's to inform people for their safety, if they need to take precautions, or simply just to give them access to that information if it may pertain to them all in the effort to provide suitable information for their viewers.
- Mostly all news stories will pertain to politics a couple times if not everyday. They usually inform us on upcoming elections or changes or announcements made from people in the political field. More recently, news channels or reports have widely covered the 2020 presidential election because this presidential election is one of the most important in history and of course, it immensely pertains to the citizens of the United States.

4. Imagine you met someone today who has not looked at the news in over a week. Based on what you have heard about in the news over the last week, **write your responses to the following**:

| What are the top three things a person needs | Currently, the top three things a person needs |
| --- | --- |

| to know about what is happening in the world this week? | to know news about in the world this week are Covid 19 coverage and statistics, the 2020 presidential election, and murders or phenomena happening locally. WIth Covid-19 coverage, the news states the statistics usually within the counties with the highest number of cases per day so that the people of those counties can be informed so that they can take precautions and understand the seriousness of the spread and how it could affect them. With the presidential election it's current and it's one of the most important along with the fact that it would affect the future of our country's people but also the country as a whole. With the murders and phenomena, the citizens' lives could be in danger so it's best that people know so that they can take precautions and overall, stay safe from whatever is occurring. |
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| How did you learn about these issues? | I've learned about all of these issues through the news on T.V, Instagram, Youtube, a number of articles on google on the matters, and the news app on my phone since occasionally, it sends notifications about the occurrences. |

## 5. Respond to the following:

| What stories do you see the most in the news? | The stories the news mostly cover fit under the categories of politics, death, medical concerns or information, and natural disasters coverages or simply things or events the news feels will interest the public the most. |
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| How might the stories you chose differ from someone else in your class? Or in your family? Or from someone in another part of the world? | Everyone has different preferences and perspectives on certain topics and with that, they form opinions and interests but that varies depending on the person. Some news might appear more important in their eyes depending on what's more interesting or what may affect them the most. For example, people in class said they would like to see more news stories covering people volunteering and although that's important, I feel they should cover more serious things like global warming and the pandemic more |

| | in depth because that's some topics of importance to me. |
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| What is something that you think is important, but that you don't see much about in the news? | Something that I feel that's important that doesn't get much coverage is global warming. Global warming will eventually affect people all over the world and I feel that if it got more coverage and more people became aware of how serious the matter is, more people would contribute to the cause of doing things like reducing our carbon footprint or recycling and things of that matter because we only have one Earth and it seems not many people understand that once it's gone, we are all gone. |
| Why do you think news outlets choose to feature some stories more than others? | News outlets choose to feature some stories more than others because it's all about what will get more viewing. Most news outlets cover inspiring stories and they focus primarily on more positive than the negative occurrences because these things are events that'll interest the majority of the people viewing. People like to see certain things like violence or simply whatever may be eye catching to the public. |

5. An **under-reported story** is a news story that doesn't get as much attention in the news. Predict:

   a. Look back to your responses for question 5. Why do you think news outlets are focusing on these stories, and not others?
   The news stories that are covered are covered to most interest the public the most whether it's deemed important or unimportant. As stated earlier, the stories the news mostly cover fit under the categories of politics, death, medical concerns or information, and natural disasters coverages or simply things or events the news feels will interest the public the most. Not to mention, they cover more current and popular stories to keep the attention of viewers.

   b. Why are some news stories receiving less attention? Try to think of at least three reasons!
   An example would be the BLM protests. Even in May, they weren't really covered unless they got violent because that's what interests the public and it's what would attract the most views and it's simply because the news doesn't feel some stories or parts of stories will interest the majority of its viewers. Some treated the matter as a trend and haven't posted real coverage since June and early July because they cover more current and

popular topics such as the 2020 presidential election. Like other stories, some events get overshadowed and become outdated by the current occurrences.

- Biased news reports
- What's deemed important or interesting to the public
- An events popularity

7. The Pulitzer Center is a nonprofit organization that is dedicated to supporting under-reported stories. The Center supports projects in over 100 news outlets every year on a wide range of topics. Review this video below, which features Pulitzer Center editors and journalists, and compare your predictions about why some stories receive less attention to their response.

8. After viewing the video, write your responses to the questions below:

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| According to the speakers in the video, what is an under-reported story? | An under-reported story covers an issue that is important that doesn't get the proper attention it deserves. When covered by the news, they do not tell the whole story or they are focused on other or more popular stories and they get pushed aside and discarded. Under-reported stories allow us to see the world in a new life, allow change, to and understand most topics that mainstream media doesn't focus on mostly because people choose what gets seen and heard by the public. |
| How are under-reported news stories different from other news stories? Reference examples from the video in your description. | Under-reported stories are different from other news stories because the stories are events that no one talks about and they don't get the attention they deserve as would a more popular topic like the pandemic. An example front he video would be the article on why the gap between the rich and the poor continues to expand. As the days go on and especially now during the pandemic, people have lost their housing and have gone into poverty/homelessness and with this pandemic, many people have also lost their job which can also lead to poverty. So even though these are things that may widely affect the people, it's not covered because it's not of interest or popularity. |
| How can you find under-reported stories, in the news and in your own communities? | In order to find these stories, people should notice and figure out whatever is interesting or opinions on topics they may agree or |

| | disagree with. Then they should determine why so they know what they're looking for in an under-reported story. They should start with the questions that bother them, topics no one addresses and then they should begin talking to people and conducting interviews along with following up on their own research from trustworthy stories/articles. |
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## Introducing the Skill: Finding and Evaluating Under-reported Stories

If under-reported stories communicate issues that don't get a lot of attention, how do journalists find these stories in the first place? Where do they look? Who do they talk to? What kinds of questions do they ask themselves to decide if they want to pursue a story? In this lesson you will explore these questions by connecting with members of the editorial team at the Pulitzer Center, a nonprofit that raises awareness of under-reported global issues through direct support for quality journalism across all media platforms and a unique program of education and public outreach.

In this video, Pulitzer Center's Managing Director Nathalie Applewhite and Executive Editor Marina Walker Guevara describe three ways to find under-reported stories that interest you. Watch the video, and evaluate how journalists use the following strategies to find under-reported stories:

- **Analyze news and question what is missing**
- **Talk to people about issues that matter to them**
- **Observe the people and places around you, and get curious**

After watching the video, **write your responses to the following questions**:

| What questions can you ask yourself while watching the news to start noticing under-reported stories? | What is happening, and why? Who is affected, why? Who might be affected and is not represented in these stories? What do these issues look like in my community? Is this accurate? Is this all there is to the story? What are the excess details? |
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| What is an example of an under-reported story investigated by a Pulitzer | An example of an under-reported story that was mentioned and investigated by a Pulitzer |

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| Center-supported journalist in response to the novel coronavirus? Why is this story considered under-reported? | Center-supported journalist was Coronavirus coverage. This story is considered under-reported because it was discovered that there had been warnings in the past of a possible global pandemic but they had been ignored. So, the journalist wanted to know the consequences of this. They wanted to find out the impact of the virus on the most vulnerable such as people of color, undocumented immigrants, and students along with why and how they were the most impacted and what can be done to assist them. |
| What questions can you ask someone in your life to identify an under-reported story? | What issues are important to you and why? What issues are impacting the people you care about and how? |
| What was journalist Daniella Zalcman researching before she learned about the impacts of Canada's Indian residential school program? | Journalist Daniella Zalcman began investigating why the rate of HIV infections was rising specifically amongst indigineous communities in Canada in the year 2014 before she learned about the impacts of Canada's Indian residential school program. Zalcman interviewed dozens of the population of the indigineous in Canada to understand and analyze their perspectives on the matter and the issues that mattered to them. |
| What questions can you ask yourself while observing your immediate environment to begin identifying under-reported stories? | Where are you now? What do you see? Who do you see? What doesn't make sense to you? What do you see that seems unfair or confusing? What do you want to know more about? |
| What did journalist Sim Chi Yin observe in Beijing, and how did that inspire her photography project, "Beijing's Rat Tribe?" | Photojournalist Sim Chi Yin became curious about Beijing's migrant workers and it interested her so much because she realized |

| | that these migrants are the backbone of Beijing's service industry. From then, she was inspired to make portraits of the migrants to show how normal they are and how they are regular people and thus came her project "Beijing's Rat Tribe". |
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| Which story cited in the video would you be most interested in exploring further, and why? | One story cited in the video I would most be interested in exploring further is the question of why were the warnings of a global pandemic ignored and why was there no coverage on the virus in its first weeks. The virus has widely affected Texas which is the state in which I live and even more so, it has immensely affected my county. Texas has just topped over a million cases and who's to say that the pandemic could have been stopped or gone by now if we had known earlier, knew what precautions had to be taken, and simply if everything hadn't opened up so soon. |
| Which strategy would you most like to try to begin finding under-reported stories in your community? | Explore the news. Talk to the people around me. Become curious about my surroundings. |

## Read and Analyze: How do you find and analyze under-reported stories?

The articles below were referenced by the editors in the video. Select one to read, and find the the associated PDF:

- "Health Care Workers Seek to Flatten COVID-19's 'Second Curve' --Their Rising Mental Anguish" by Rodrigo Pérez Ortega for *Science Magazine*
- "El bus que nunca llega: Los migrantes varados en las calles de Lima tomada por la pandemia" by Musuk Nolte for *Ojo Brujo* (spanish)
- "Pictured with their Past: Survivors of Canadas' 'Cultural Genocide" Speak Out" by Daniella Zalcman for *National Geographic*
- "Beijing's Rat Tribe: The Chinese Dream Goes Underground" by Sim Chi Yin for *Foreign Affairs*

1. After reading, **use the following questions to analyze the story you selected**:

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| What details stood out to you from the story the journalist reported? Use these details to write a 3-5 sentence summary of the story. | Daniella Zalcman's project was titled "Signs of Your Identity," in an attempt to get to the root of the historical trauma indigineous people in Canada had to endure from the late 1800s to 1996 in the Indian Residential Schools in Canada. They took children as young as 2 and when they were at these schools they were abused, sexually assaulted, not allowed to speak their native language, and not allowed to follow indegionous traditions. It was described as cultural genocide and through all the people Zalcman interviewed, it was found that they had all struggled with PTSD, depression, and addiction. But, the whole project was about shedding light to the stories of the indigineous, to expose the residential schools, and to let them speak about their trauma as the healing process begins. |
| Why do you think this qualifies as an under-reported story? | This most definitely qualifies as an under-reported story because the only time this topic was covered to me, was in a T.V show. Meaning, without that T.V show, I would have no knowledge of this occurring simply because it wasn't put out to the media and it was indeed under-reported. There were real people behind this event that were hurt and traumatized for years all the way up to 1996, which is quite recent and they didn't get a formal apology until 2008 which was 12 years ago. The news stories that are covered interest the public the most so something about indigenous hardships in Canada, wouldn't make it to news reports there or in places like the United States. Not to mention, news reports tend to cover more current and popular stories to keep the attention of viewers. |
| Why is this story important? What connections can you make between this story, and issues/people/places in your own community? | This story is important because we need to recognize the trauma and the hardships indigenous people had to go through because they are native to North America. I can automatically make a connection because I am a person of color and with that comes discrimination and mistreatment. No one |

| | deserves to go through someone dismissing their culture and abusing them and to know that people had to endure this for so long breaks my heart. This topic needed to be put out into the public and recognized so that we can understand and help these people as we would want someone to do for us. |
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## Practice: Find under-reported stories from where you are right now!

Use the exercises below to develop ideas for under-reported stories that you could investigate on your own. You may choose **ONE** to do.

**1. Analyze news and question what is missing**

a. Review the front page(s) of a newspaper, a homepage of an online news site and an episode of a television news program. As you read/watch, make a list of the stories that received the most coverage.

- Covid-19 victims who struggle with treatment options.

- After a deadly weekend, more officers are being sent to high-crime areas.

- Joe Biden won countries that represent 70% of the U.S economy.

b. Pick one issue highlighted on the news, and use the following questions to identify an idea for an under-reported story connected to that issue.

| What is happening, and why? | Approximately 10% of people who have contracted Coronavirus have begun suffering from long-term symptoms and how they struggle with any treatment options. This is happening because we have never seen Covid-19 before and there has yet to be any discovered treatments or vaccines along with the fact that it's unpredictable as it continues to spread. In Texas the daily new cases go up by about 6000 which Trump and lawmakers in Congress continue to tell the struggling people to continue to wait for help. |
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| Who is affected, and why? | People with underlying health conditions and people of colorethnic minorities have been most at risk due to the high rates of poverty, |

| | discrimination, and healthcare access within these communities. It has also affected the working age groups which is about 20-40 year old people and this is because most if them have families and even during the pandemic, they have to work and put themselves at risk to provide for their families if not for themselves. |
|---|---|
| Who might be affected, but is not represented in these stories? | When I mentioned ethnic minorities, that subject was only covered on certain news reports so they also might not be telling all there is to the stories. It wasn't stated which health diseases were putting these people at risk, how exactly it is affecting ehnic minorities,  along with what could possibly be done for these people. Even though Covid-19 is one of the first things you see covered on news reports, they aren't giving us all the details and coverage we need in order to help the ethnic minorities and further try to decrease the viruses spread. |
| What do these issues look like in my community? | As stated earlier, Covid-19 has widely affected Texas which is the state in which I live and even more so, it has immensely affected my county. Texas has just topped over a million cases and not much has been done to prevent this. Businesses are back opened, schools are back open, and people aren't taking the precautions that were given towards the beginning of the pandemic. Things as simple as wearing a mask and staying 6 feet apart has been ignored and it has resulted in the huge rise in cases and it widened the affect the virus has on ethnic minorities in Texas and more specifically, Tarrant county. |

c. Write a 3-5 sentence description below of your story idea that answers the following questions:

- What is the under-reported story you want to investigate?
- Why do you think this story is important?
- How would you research this story? Consider the following as you outline your plan: *What online sources could you use to learn more? Who could you interview? Who is connected to this issue and how? What places might you visit to see the causes and impacts of this issue for yourself?*

The under-reported story I want to investigate is the effects and causes of global warming and how it will affect people and the Earth's environment. This story is extremely important because global warming will and will continue to alter our future because as more greenhouse gases go into the Earth's atmosphere, there will be severe changes in weather, pollution, and excess stress placed on the environment. To research this information, I will probably have to look at various articles online, watch videos on YouTube pertaining to the matter. With this topic I would interview global warming activists and people who study the topic to get their standpoint on the problem and to see what they think needs to be done to stop or reverse this issue. This story is connected to the 7 billion people that inhabit the Earth. This is our one and only home and global warming goes to show that we aren't taking care of it like we should. Global warming will result in higher temperatures, a worsening in natural disasters, result in wildfires (which can be seen in California), and a strain on the physical places we hold dear to us like places such as The Great Barrier Reef which has already begun to be affected by global warming. Furthermore, I would visit places like the Great Barrier Reef and other physical environments to see how much they have changed and been altered by the effects of global warming.

## 2. Talk to people about issues that matter to them

    a.   Make a list of people you have seen in the last week. Consider, who do you want to know more about?
- My Mom

- My friend

- My sister

    b.   Pick one or two people who you feel comfortable talking with, and use the following questions to guide your conversation:
- ○ What issues are important to you, and why?
- ○ What issues are impacting the people you know, and how?

    c.   Use your interviews to identify an idea for an under-reported story. Write a 3-5 sentence description of your story idea below that answers the following questions:
- ○ What is the under-reported story you want to investigate?
- ○ Why do you think this story is important?
- ○ How would you research this story? Consider the following as you outline your plan:*What online sources could you use to learn more? Who could you interview? Who is connected to this issue and how? What places might you visit to see the causes and impacts of this issue for yourself?*

The under-reported story I want to investigate is the rise in poverty and homelessess due to Covid-19. With the pandemic the homeless population has increased and it's because

hundreds of thousands of people have lost their job and it was a shock to our economy so people and lawmakers are not sure what to do nor do they know what exactly needs to be done. No solid plan or resolution has been made and it's affecting nearly everybody. The people behind the numbers and statistics are real people and oftentimes good people that are enduring the hardships of homelessness and poverty. More fortunate people develop these stereotypes on homeless people and they tend to turn their backs on them. The issue has impacted my mom and a handful of her friends and with this, they don't know when or what their next meal is going to be. People are fighting to fill in available jobs, some people are living paycheck to paycheck and when payment is taken away, they have to wonder things like how are they going to pay their bills, how are they going to support their family and themselves which is stuff people shouldn't have to worry about. Some online sources that could be used to learn more are articles from organizations that cover the matter and also Youtube videos with valid information and statistics. I could interview the people running those organizations or even homeless people to see their point of view. Everyone affected by the virus is connected to this issue because it could affect all of us. Who's to say more people won't lose their jobs. I would visit places of high poverty and homelessness rates in order to see the causes and the impacts of this issue for myself.

**3. Observe the people and places around you, and get curious**

a. Make a list of the places that you have seen in the past day.
- Grocery stores

- Restaurants

- Schools

b. Pick one of these places, and use the following questions to come up with an idea for an under-reported story that you could investigate on your own:
  ○ What doesn't make sense to you?
  ○ What do you see that feels unfair or confusing?
  ○ What do you want to know more about?

c. Write a 3-5 sentence description below of your story idea that answers the following questions:
  ○ What is the under-reported story you want to investigate?
  ○ Why do you think this story is important?
  ○ How would you research this story? Consider the following as you outline your plan.*What online sources could you use to learn more? Who could you interview? Who is connected to this issue and how? What places might you visit to see the causes and impacts of this issue for yourself?*

The under-reported story I want to investigate is why so many schools opened up during the global pandemic. This is so important to me because I am a student and I have 3 more years of school to go through before I'm graduated and what doesn't make sense to me is why they

would put so many children at risk to the virus when we could have remained remote or virtual for a little while longer until things died down a bit. The reopening is affecting all students and possibly even spreading the virus more. Several schools have had outbreaks and have had to close back down, not to mention a lot of school/student activities have been postponed like sports such as football. To research these stories, I would look at articles pertaining to the subject, articles on how schools are handling and how they feel about the subject, and YouTube videos that go more in depth to the issue. I would choose to interview school administrators, students, and nurses at the schools to understand their point of view and discuss with the administrators why they decided to open, discuss with the students why they decided to come on campus, and discuss with the nurses how they would handle the students. As stated before, all students whether they are in kindergarten or college are affected because this is their life and their academic future. Coming on campus so soin isn't safe and it puts these students at risk of the virus. I would visit some schools that decided to re-open and conduct my interviews.