

WHAT PEOPLE WANT TO KNOW ABOUT THE NEWS

Austin, TX – October 31, 2019 – Knowing what readers want out of a story – or what they think newsrooms often fail to address – provides an opportunity to increase trust. In this study, the [Center for Media Engagement](#) went straight to news consumers for answers.

When asked to explain their questions about news stories, readers in our focus groups wanted newsrooms to make four main improvements:

- Dig deeper into stories.
- Explain terminology.
- Clarify why certain voices were included in stories and others were left out.
- Avoid what readers perceived as journalists' biased depiction of sources.

Based on the areas of concern raised by the participants, we recommend that newsrooms:

- Provide more context in stories and link to previous coverage.
- Explain key terminology and government or police processes.
- Include a wide range of relevant sources and thoroughly explain source choices.
- Provide a statement of independence, stating lack of relationship with story sources.
- Place key information up-front or in a box within the story.

“By taking these concerns into account during the reporting process, newsrooms can create stories that better connect with readers and that build trust,” says researcher Tamar Wilner.

This research was supported by American Press Institute. To read more about the findings, access the full report on our website:

<https://mediaengagement.org/research/what-people-want-to-know/>

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The Center for Media Engagement, part of the Moody College of Communication at The University of Texas at Austin, provides research-based techniques for engaging digital audiences in commercially viable and democratically beneficial ways. Learn more at mediaengagement.org.