

Research & quotes - difference

Getting the Story · By Simon Townsend · 1 min read

Remember that research and quotes are quite different. When you use research, you use facts and figures from sources such as books, pamphlets, websites, reports, surveys, official documents, etc (that is, material published before). When you use quotes, you are using fresh words said to YOU the journalist by someone you have spoken to, usually on the phone. Most quotes are inside quotation marks (direct quotes) and these are the person's words verbatim. Some quotes are paraphrased (indirect) and this is your (the writer's) version of the person's spoken words:

DIRECT: "Elsie took the knife out, and then sharpened it slowly, and then, well, she plunged it, sudden like, into Arthur's chest," Rosanna said.

INDIRECT: Rosanna claimed that Elsie took the knife out, sharpened it slowly and suddenly plunged it into Arthur's chest.

Yes, you can use a quote like this:

The actor told The Australian last week: "I wouldn't spit on him if he was on fire."

It may be that you can't get to speak to the actor, or this was the only time she made this dramatic statement. But your editor primarily wants fresh and exclusive quotes (spoken words said recently only to you). Not old quotes and not re-hashed quotes off the internet or from other media.

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