



# Inclusive Content Analysis

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Eric Garcia McKinley, PhD  
Abigail Chang

**IMPACT** ARCHITECTS

# Background

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In spring 2023 Impact Architects (IA) partnered with LAist to conduct a content audit of LAist audio, digital, and newsletter content.

The purpose of the audit was to demonstrate the degree to which LAist is adhering to the organization's [Dialogue style guide](#) – which emphasizes story framing and inclusive language – and to provide LAist insight into its practices. The analysis also provided a point of comparison with a 2022 audit of LAist's content.



# Findings

35.6%

of stories **feature community members** as the predominant voices

33.4%

of stories are **solutions oriented**

21.5%

of stories have at least one image that **doesn't follow best practices for alt text**

5.2%

of the images in stories that have an **image that is not directly tied to the theme** of the story

4%

of stories include non person-first language

1%

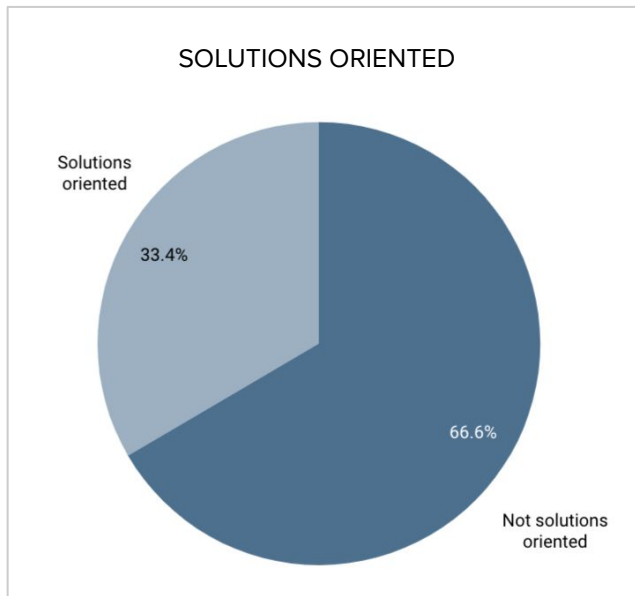
of stories have an image that contains a stereotype

# Summary & Analysis

LAist has adhered closely to the standards for inclusivity laid out in its style guide. The most common issues were related to missing or inadequate alt text. 21.5% of stories were flagged for not following alt text best practices. Nearly all stories (95.7%) followed LAist's guidelines for person-first language — nearly the same proportion as in the 2022 audit (97.5%). Few stories had headlines that were hyperbolic, contained a stereotype, or were passive, and few featured an image that contained a stereotype.

While we kept most of the coding framework consistent with the 2022 analysis, we modified some questions after field-testing variations, leading to more consistent and reliable data. The full coding framework for the 2023 analysis can be found in the methodology section, and the framework for the 2022 analysis is in the appendix.

One-third of articles with a solvable problem also include information to effect change.



## Framing

"News" was the most commonly coded topic for all content sampled so far (33.5%). Though it should be noted that all newsletters and newscasts were coded as "News" by default because they are not designated and almost always include multiple topics, which inflates the overall percentage. Still, at 17.7%, "News" was still the most common for Digital News content. Given the high proportion of "News" content, it is perhaps unsurprising that the majority of stories were not solutions-oriented since stories from the "News" topic generally focused on delivering information rather than presenting means of addressing a problem.

In this analysis, we found a higher percentage of solutions-oriented stories than in 2022. Unlike the 2022 analysis, the coding question regarding solutions-oriented content included an "N/A" option for stories that did not address a solvable problem, which were filtered out in the final analysis. The result is a more accurate accounting of applicable stories. Moreover, we modified the coding question to more accurately reflect LAist's vision of solutions-oriented reporting: "Does the article provide information for the reader/listener to effect change?"

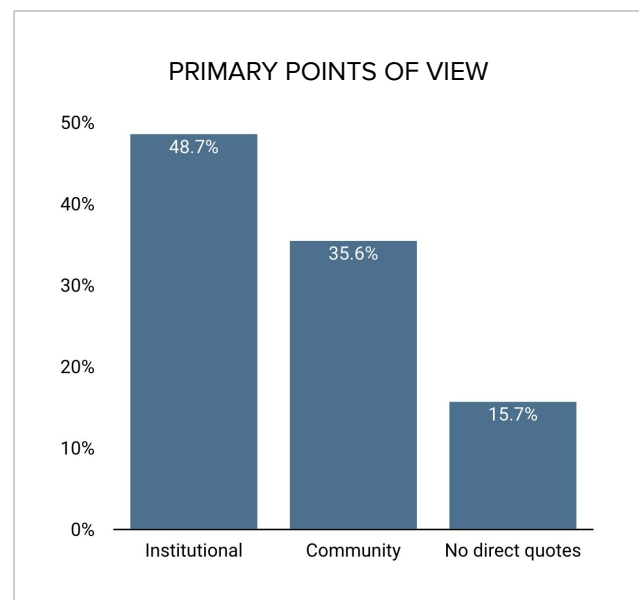
Stories recommending events such as [Best Things To Do This Weekend In Los Angeles And SoCal: Dec. 9 - 11](#) were often coded as "N/A" since they did not address an issue. Stories like [OK, The Less Threatening Part Of The San Andreas Fault Could Still Cause A Big Earthquake. But Don't Panic!](#) were coded as "N/A" because they featured a problem that was not solvable by humans. Even with the addition of the N/A option, coding revealed a higher proportion of stories that were solutions-oriented than the 2022 audit, suggesting that news content in 2022 is more solutions-oriented than content from the latter half of 2021. Newsletters had the highest proportion of solutions-oriented articles with 50% coded as such. Airtalk segments and episodes also had a high proportion of solutions-oriented content — 35.1% of Airtalk content were coded as N/A, and the remaining stories were evenly split between solutions-oriented and non-solutions-oriented.

Content marked as solutions-oriented included stories like [How Employers Can Help Workers Who Struggle With Their Mental Health](#), an edition of the How to LA newsletter that directly provides advice for addressing a problem. Solutions-oriented content also included stories that featured an individual or organization's effort to fix a problem that also include an action a reader can take, such as the hiring stipend referred to in the article, [To Make Up For Teacher Shortage, Los Angeles Unified Turns To Staff Who Left Teaching](#).

## Among all pieces of content, less than half had a primarily institutional point of view

IA found that coded content more often features institutional voices than community voices — with 48.7% coded as primarily institutional, 35.6% coded as primarily community, and 15.7% coded as not including direct quotes from a source. This is different from the 2022 analysis, in which community voices, at 65.5%, were more prevalent than institutional. However, it's important

to note that the language of the coding questions regarding institutional and community voices differed from the earlier audit. In the 2022 audit, the question asked, "Are the most prominent voices – sources with extensive or multiple quotes and/or paraphrases – representative of individual/community voices rather than institutions?" while the question for this analysis simply asks, "What is the primary point of view of the article?" Additionally, this analysis also included a third option to distinguish stories that did not include any direct quotations from sources in addition to "Community" and "Institutional," which the 2022 review did not have.



The How to LA podcast, which typically follows the host as he does on-the-ground reporting in neighborhoods throughout LA, featured the greatest proportion of content that primarily featured community voices. The podcast format presents a straightforward way to amplify community voices, following the host as he speaks with street food vendors about the legalization effort or traverses LA's new bike lanes and interviews passersby about their impact. Though it should be noted that IA coded only 12 episodes, a small sample compared to other content areas, 72.7% of the episodes primarily featured community voices.

Airtalk segments featured the highest proportion of content coded as containing primarily institutional voices, at 70.3%. However, this was likely due in part to the nature of the coding question, which defined whether content was primarily institutional or community based on the number of paragraphs (or, in this case, amount of speaking time) devoted to each of the perspectives. Given that Airtalk often featured a main guest speaker who was often a more institutional voice, Airtalk content was often coded as primarily institutional — despite the fact that it tended to include a great number of community voices in the form of listeners who called or emailed the show. And given its talk show format, Airtalk also sometimes served as a platform for community members to voice their opinions and experiences in the hopes of influencing local policy, raising awareness, or creating other change.

For example, a caller for a show about skyrocketing gas prices raised issues with proposed gas rebate legislation, addressing any lawmakers that might have been tuned into the show and attesting to how it would exclude her as a rideshare driver who rents her car. “If anyone is listening, I would just like them to know that there are thousands of us that are renting cars that are paying more because we're rideshare drivers, but we're not being considered in the gas rebate,” the caller said.

# Imagery

LAist adhered closely to the Dialogue guidelines for images, with only 5.2% of stories featuring an image that was not tied to the theme of the story. The images flagged were generally not completely unconnected from the theme, but rather were not very illustrative, such as a picture of the sun for [Feeling Sweaty? It's Gonna Get Even Hotter This Weekend](#).

## LA County Rules For Lifting Masking Draws Debate From Supervisor Kathryn Barger

Published Feb 8, 2022 5:21 PM



Kids line up outside school on the first day at Montara Avenue Elementary School in South Gate.

Some were not connected at all, such as the example on the left, which does not make clear that the person depicted is the person mentioned in the headline, mostly because the caption, "Kids line up outside school on the first day at Montara Avenue Elementary School in South Gate," appears to be incorrect.

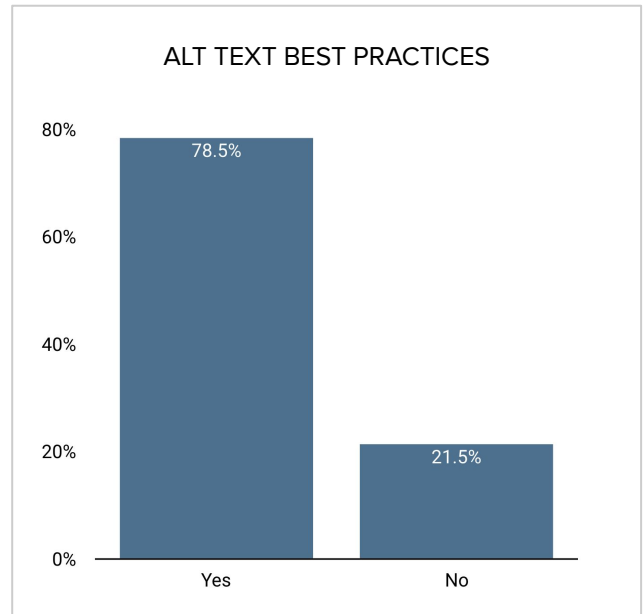
About 1% of stories featured an image that contained a stereotype. The images coded as containing a stereotype generally were marked as such because they suggested a narrow or misleading view of the subject of the story. For example, the story [Activists Work To Preserve And Pass On Indigenous Serrano Language](#) features an image (right) of a family at a protest for Indigenous people's rights, according to the caption, but the story does not mention a protest and heavily features a non-California Indigenous language learner. The image was coded as containing a stereotype because it could be interpreted as conflating the broader fight for Indigenous rights with the specific work of teaching Indigenous languages to Indigenous and non-Indigenous language learners.



A family at a protest for Indigenous people's rights in downtown L.A.

The area where content most frequently deviated from Dialogue imagery guidelines was alt text, with 21.5% of coded stories marked as not following alt text guidelines. This was often because alt text was missing from one or more images or because the alt text provided was not gender neutral.

LAist has an opportunity for more inclusive content production by ensuring the consistent application of alt text best practices.



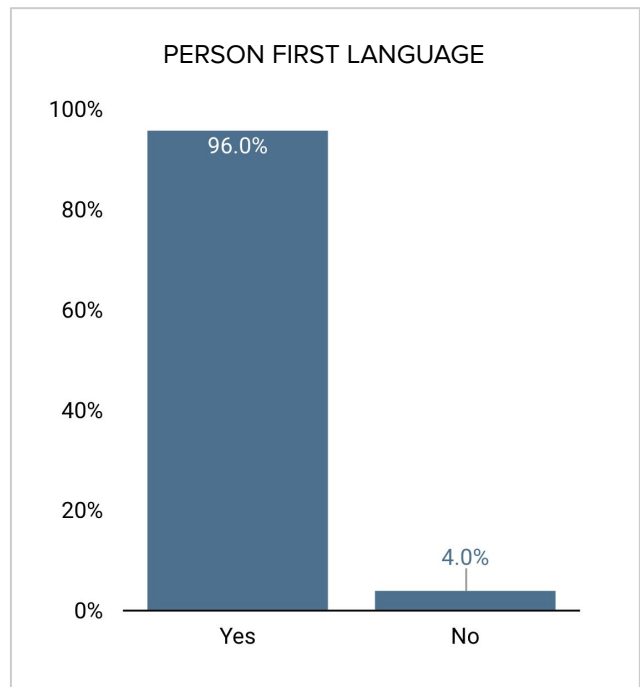
Though IA's team did not code for it, alt text frequently included minor typos, which could make the text more difficult to understand when read by a screen reader. LAist has an opportunity for more inclusive content production by ensuring the consistent application of alt text.



# Inclusive Language

Similar to the 2022 analysis, nearly all articles — 95.7% — followed LAist’s guidelines for person-first language. The articles that contained instances of non-person-first language generally did not include such language throughout, and instead had one or two instances. For example, the article [California Considers Guaranteed Income For Homeless Students So ‘Sticker Shock’ Doesn’t Keep Them From College](#) refers to “homeless students” rather than “unhoused students” in the headline, though the rest of the article follows LAist’s guidelines. The Voter Game Plan article for the [California Governor](#) mentions “homeless people” a single time in the article text, though the rest of the article aligns with LAist’s style guide. The pattern was similar for audio content — in one Airtalk segment about the education system and students with learning disabilities, the host and reporter said “dyslexic students” rather than “student with dyslexia” a couple of times in their conversation.

Similar to the 2022 analysis, nearly all articles — 96.0% — followed LAist’s guidelines for person-first language.



IA also coded for other instances of non-inclusive or stigmatizing language, such as language that was ableist or featured monolithic characterizations, or language that was not gender neutral, age neutral, LGBTQ+ affirming, or racially and/or ethnically inclusive. Though instances of non-gender inclusive language occurred most prominently in alt text or captions, such as in this [Morning Brief edition](#) that appears to assume the gender of a person in the photograph, sometimes the body text of an article contained instances of language that could have been more inclusive. In some content mentioning reproductive care or childbirth, only women were addressed. For example, [Morning Brief: Your Voting Plan, Baby Formula, And ‘Score for Here’](#) described data-privacy concerns regarding period tracking apps and how they “could be used to penalize women” in a post-Roe America. Other content included language that LAist’s style guide recommends avoiding, such as this [P.M. Edition newscast](#), which used the term “inmate” to describe someone detained in the California prison system. In general, however, instances of non-inclusive or non-person-first language were infrequent.

## Flagged for style guide infraction

Non-person first language ([digital news](#)):  
 “California Considers Guaranteed Income For **Homeless Students** So ‘Sticker Shock’ Doesn’t Keep Them From College”

Non-person first language ([newsletter](#)):  
 “According to Robert’s reporting, California does not even require training for new teachers to help them better address **dyslexic students’** needs.”

Not gender neutral ([newsletter](#)): “...data collected from period-tracking apps could be used to penalize **women** in the wake of the leaked draft Supreme Court opinion...”

Not age neutral ([digital news](#)): “The parents of Monique Muñoz, who was killed in 2021 by a speeding **teen driver** in West Los Angeles, will receive more than \$18 million in a wrongful death settlement — and could receive more than \$25 million in total.”

Not racially and/or ethnically inclusive ([digital news, alt text](#)): “On the right of the frame other **diverse** members of the public are standing, some holding signs up.”

Ableist language ([digital news](#)): “The September cyberattack **crippled** LAUSD’s systems and disrupted classes for at least a week.”

Other departures from the style guide ([newscast](#)):  
 Use of “**inmate**.”

## Follows style guide

Person-first language ([digital news](#)): “Here’s what to know about voting when you’re **experiencing homelessness**”

Person first language ([digital news](#)): Probate conservatorships most often involve **people with developmental or intellectual disabilities or those with age-related disabilities** such as Alzheimer’s or dementia.

Gender neutral ([newsletter](#)):  
 “The postpartum phase can be The Great Unknown to **birthing parents** because they don’t know how they might feel — emotionally or physically — after giving birth to a new life.”

Age neutral ([digital news](#)): “Lily Kramon, a **17-year-old** Teen Line volunteer, completed 65 hours of training and months of observing calls and texts before she took her first call from a peer.”

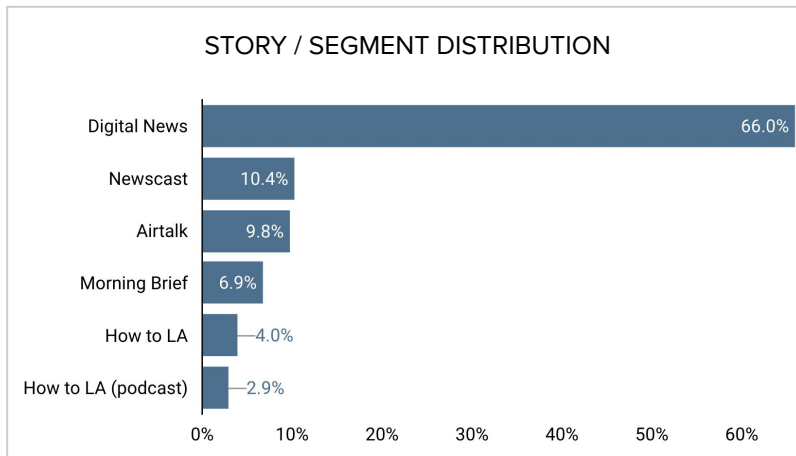
Racially and/or ethnically inclusive ([digital news, alt text](#)): “A man with **light brown skin** holds up two pictures rendered in black and white.”

More neutral language ([digital news](#)): “Those security liabilities were documented in a September 2020 report that will help district leaders decipher why **the district fell victim to a ransomware attack** over the Labor Day holiday weekend...”

Adheres to guidelines regarding incarceration ([digital news](#)): “The number of **young people in detention** has declined over the past several years...”

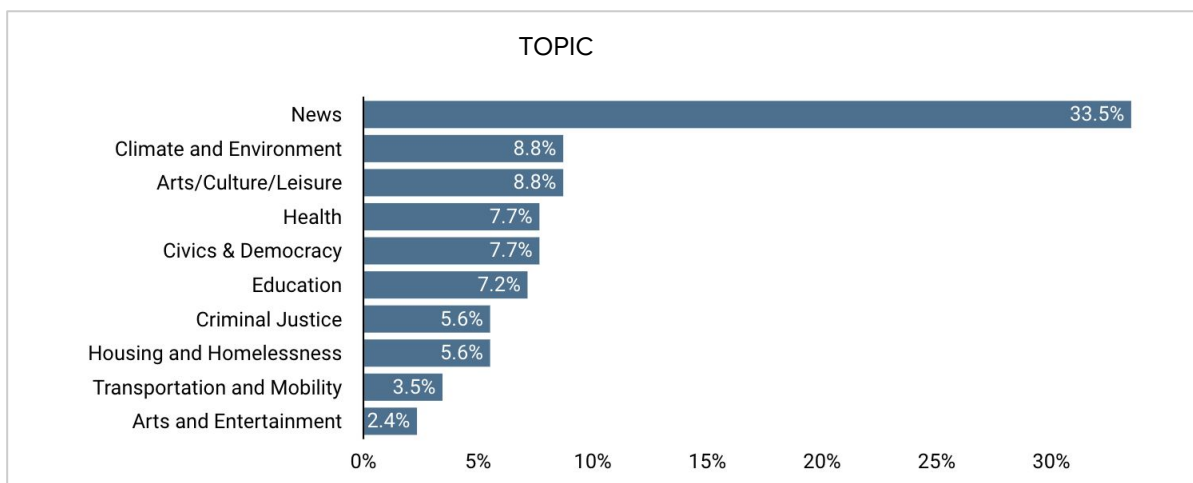
# Methodology

IA selected a random, representative sample of content produced from January 1, 2022, to December 31, 2022, including five content areas: Digital News, the How to LA newsletter and podcast, the Morning Brief newsletter, and the AM and PM editions of the LA Report, (January-June, 2022). We coded roughly 20% of the content produced from each content area over that time period. Digital News and newsletters included a full textual review, while the audit of podcasts and Newscasts included a review of audio content. The audit of AirTalk focused primarily on segments, though IA coded a small number of full shows.



The audit included a total of 376 records. Digital News comprised 62.1% of the stories audited, followed by Newscasts (12.3%), AirTalk (11.7%), Morning Brief (6.3%), the How to LA newsletter (4.1%), and the How to LA podcast (3.5%).

We classified each Digital News topic based on LAist's taxonomy and identification. Because they contain multiple topics, all newsletters, Newscasts, and full AirTalk episodes were coded as "News." For AirTalk segments and How to LA podcast episodes, which did not include tags, we used our judgment in identifying a topic, again using KPCC/LAist's language and taxonomy.



The audit focused on three aspects within each piece of content:

FRAMING

IMAGERY

INCLUSIVE  
LANGUAGE

IA developed a coding framework that included a series of yes or no questions that the team of coders answered for each piece of content, when applicable (for instance, newscasts and podcasts are exclusively audio, and thus don't have corresponding images). IA relied on LAist's [Dialogue style guide](#) to develop the rubric, especially for answering the question about inclusive language. LAist regularly updates its Dialogue style guide. We developed the rubric [based on the version up to date through April 18 2023](#), while the coding took place from April to October, 2023, and may have referenced the style guide that included updates made from June through September, 2023. Each content area included a roughly 10% inter-coder reliability check, wherein two coders independently coded a story/segment, and we compared the results to ensure consistency.

## BASELINE INFORMATION

<b>Date</b>	Date of publication or the date of the most recent update.
<b>Headline</b>	The exact headline of either the story or, in the case of AirTalk, the segment being coded.
<b>Primary topic (if applicable)</b>	The primary tag at the top of each article.
<b>Content type</b>	AirTalk, Digital News, How to LA, How to LA (podcast), Morning Brief, Newscasts.

## FRAMING

## Does the headline contain any of the following characteristics?

<b>Hyperbole</b>	Alarmist language not merited by the theme of the article.
<b>Stereotype</b>	Stereotypical language, especially if in reference to historically excluded groups.
<b>Passive</b>	Does not include an actor and an action.
<b>People/community-centered storytelling</b>	What is the primary point of view of the article? "Primary" meaning more than half of the paragraphs, voices, and/or images. 1. Institutional; 2. Community; 3. Unsourced. "Institutional" voices are those that speak on behalf of an entity; "Community" voices are those that speak about an individual or collective experience; "Unsourced" means no outside sources are quoted or paraphrased.
<b>Solutions oriented</b>	Does the article provide information for the reader/listener to effect change? Y/N/N/A. Examples of providing information to effect change could be a story about a response to a problem that can serve as an influence, or providing resources to take action, such as information about public meetings or making one's voice heard.

## IMAGERY

<b>Relevance to topic</b>	Is the lead image specifically tied to the theme of the story, especially in terms of people and place included in the story?
<b>Alt text</b>	Do all images follow best practices guidelines for alt text usage (refer to the "Alt text" section of the Dialogue style guide)? Answer "No" if alt text is missing from any image.
<b>Stereotypes or biases</b>	Does any image depict a stereotype, especially but not exclusively when depicting people belonging to historically excluded groups?

## INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

**Person-first language** Do all references to people use person-first language? Refer to the "Person-first Language" entry of the Dialogue style guide.

**Specific language** Do all references to groups use specific language that does not "other" the group and does not imply that it is a monolith? Refer to the "Avoiding Othering and Monolithic Language" entry of the Dialogue style guide.

**Does the story include any of the following negative characteristics that do not align with LAist's style guide?**

**Not gender neutral** Refer to the "Gender Neutral Language" entry of the Dialogue style guide.

**Not age neutral** Refer to the "Including/Describing Age" entry of the Dialogue style guide.

**Ableist** Refer to the "Avoiding Ableism" entry of the Dialogue style guide.

**Not LGBTQ+ affirming** Refer to the "LGBTQ+ People" entry of the Dialogue style guide.

**Not race and ethnic identity inclusive** Refer to the "Including Race and Ethnicity," "Capitalizing Racial and Ethnic identifiers," "Using Diverse," "Using Latino," and "Names" entries of the Dialogue style guide.

## FRAMING

<b>Descriptive headline</b>	Does the headline accurately describe the primary theme of the story, especially when assigning responsibility to action?
<b>Hyperbolic language</b>	Does the headline accurately describe the primary theme and content of the story, especially when assigning responsibility to action?
<b>People-centered storytelling</b>	Are the most prominent voices – sources with extensive or multiple quotes and/or paraphrases – representative of individual/community voices rather than institutions?
<b>Responds to a problem</b>	Does the story identify one or more ways an actor or group of actors is trying to address a social problem?

## IMAGERY

<b>Relevance to topic</b>	Is the image a depiction specifically tied to the theme of the story? For instance, an image of a masked person in a supermarket is relevant to a story about masking, but it's not relevant to a story about vaccines.
<b>Stereotypes or biases</b>	Does the image depict a stereotype, especially when depicting people from historically excluded groups or if the image is not relevant to the topic?

## INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

<b>Person first language</b>	All references to people use person first language. "Person first language" emphasizes a person rather than a condition ("people without health insurance" rather than "the uninsured") and avoids stigmatizing or inaccurate descriptors ("addict," "convict," "homeless," "mentally ill," "unauthorized immigrant").
<b>Specific language</b>	All references to groups use specific language that does not "other" the group and does not imply that it is a monolith. An example of "othering" a group is using "us/them" language that implies essential difference. An example of monolithic language is reducing multiplicity ("members of South L.A.'s Black communities") to singularity ("the Black community").
<b>Gender neutral language</b>	All references to people use gender neutral language ("business people" rather than "businessman/businesswoman," "reproductive health" rather than "women's health").
<b>Age neutral</b>	An "age neutral" story only includes a reference to a source's age if it is relevant to the topic.
<b>Non-ableist</b>	A non-ableist story does not use ableist language. Ableist language uses words or phrases that refer to conditions but are used out of context colloquially ("crazy," "turn a blind eye," "fall on deaf ears").
<b>LGBTQ+ affirming</b>	To be considered LGBTQ+ affirming, the story only explains a person's pronouns if they are uncommon, describes sexual orientation in a way that does not imply choice ("sexual preference"), does not deadname trans people, and refers to "gender assignment" rather than "biological sex."
<b>Race and ethnic identity inclusive</b>	To be considered race and ethnic identity inclusive, the story does not refer to "majority" or "minority" populations; does not use "diverse," "POC," or "BIPOC" as descriptors; capitalizes racial identifiers; identifies a person's race or ethnicity only when relevant to the story; and follows proper naming conventions for specific cultures.