

**Get paid to report the news!**

FabJob Guide to  
**Become a  
Television  
Reporter**



**REBECCA COATES NEE**

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# Welcome

Welcome to the **FabJob Guide to Become a Television Reporter**. This guide will give you all the information you need to get hired in this extremely competitive field, as well as tips on how to **stand out from the competition**.

**If you are a beginner**, this guide will offer you the tools and techniques you need to enter the world of on-camera news. We will tell you how to develop the **skills** you need to be a television reporter and give you tips on how to land the toughest job of all ... **your first one on air**.

You'll learn **insider secrets** that take years for most reporters to find out...usually the hard way.



**If you are an experienced reporter**, there are many ideas in this guide about **being successful** in your job, taking your career in a new direction, **moving up** into a larger market and making the transition to anchor.

The first step to finding a job as a television reporter is to take a look at where you are now. Are you:

- A good **writer** and **communicator**?
- Able to make any story **exciting** and **intriguing** to others?
- Interested in being **on camera**?
- Eager to **make a difference** in people's lives?

If so, you may already have many of the skills you need to become a successful television reporter.

This guide offers you:

**Information** on what the news directors are looking for

**Techniques** for getting an interview with a news director

**Insight** into TV news stations and the people who work there

**Ways** to identify job openings and potential networking opportunities

**Options** for finding a way into TV news reporting or anchoring through a back door

You'll learn about the most important things you can do to get hired and the pitfalls that cause people to miss out on getting the job – plus a great deal more!

Each section is set up for a distinct purpose: The **Introduction** looks at life as a television reporter and the **benefits** and **personal rewards** of this exciting career.

**Getting Ready** will cover developing your **interviewing** and **writing skills** and improving your **on-air delivery** and **appearance**.

**Learning the Ropes** details the **best ways to prepare yourself** for a career as a television reporter: the best schools and courses, self-education and specializing. It also discusses the all-important internship, including **how to find a great place to intern**, the process of applying and being accepted, and how to make the most of your experience once you are accepted.

**Getting Hired** has **insider advice** on:

- **Which stations** to approach for **your first job**
- The most **effective** way to **contact employers**
- Putting together and mailing **your resume tape**
- Planning your **job hunting strategy**
- The importance of **road trips**
- Succeeding at the **interview** and **audition**
- Negotiating **your first contract**

**Being Successful** gives you valuable hints on how to make the most of your new career and **move up** in the television news industry. **You won't find this kind of comprehensive, insider information on TV news anywhere else** — not even colleges teach this material!

So if you're ready for a "fab" job that can take you almost anywhere, read on!

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 What Does A Television Reporter Do?

Imagine standing on a crowded convention hall floor with thousands cheering around you. You're looking into a camera, gripping a microphone and balancing headphones over your ears.

**You are getting ready to “go live,”** but first you must wait for the President of the United States, who is across the room, to finish speaking. You look up and see the back of Dan Rather's head — he's waiting too. He'll go first; then it's your turn to shine.

Not all days are **this exciting** in television news, but few are boring and **no two are ever the same**. Television news reporters may be covering a political convention one week, interviewing Oprah Winfrey the next and battling a hurricane threat after that. Anchors usually will do their reporting in the studio behind the news desk, but not always. Many anchors also will do some **reporting on location** or “in the field.”

Reporters spend much of their time away from the station, in the field with a photographer. Larger stations often provide a field producer to help the reporter gather information, conduct interviews and write the story. But most reporters won't have this luxury. In fact, some are even **shooting their own video**.

Most TV news stations are staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Reporters and anchors may work an early morning shift from 4 a.m. to 1 p.m., a “dayside” shift from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. or an evening shift from 2 p.m. to midnight. But when a major news event happens like a plane crash or severe storm, reporters can be called to the scene at any hour, with **only a moment's notice**.

## 1.2 You Can Inform And Save Lives

When a threatening situation has developed, like a hurricane or an escape from the local prison, **the job of reporters becomes critical**. They may even be saving some lives because of the valuable information they are providing.

Since many Americans now get the majority of their news and information from television, especially while events are unfolding, TV reporters have an enormous **responsibility** to give viewers the facts they need to make major decisions about their lives.

Should they buy a new house now because interest rates just dropped? Which presidential candidate is expressing views that most closely match their personal beliefs? Are the schools safe for their children? Is there a major health threat or new disease treatment they should know about?

These are just some of the questions **you'll help thousands of people** answer if you're doing your job well.

## 1.3 Benefits Of A Career In TV News

### Excitement

The excitement of a job in television news is hard to beat. Not only are you the **first to know** about major local and world events, you often get to **witness them in person**. Although most stations send reporters to cover stories that happen only in the immediate viewing area, many local stations now are sending reporters on **assignments all over the globe**.



### Travel

Tragedies like the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, D.C. or the shooting at Columbine High School in Colorado drew local reporters from all over the country. That means **you never quite know where you could end up**, from covering serious events like a natural disaster to lighter assignments like a new ride opening at a major theme park.

## Meeting People

The people you meet will range from the very ordinary to very famous. Everyone has a story to tell and that is the job of the reporter — finding **each person's story** and presenting it in an interesting, compelling manner. In my 12 years as a television news reporter and anchor, I interviewed presidential candidates, governors, senators, actors, Olympic athletes, talk show hosts, singers and musicians.

I've been sent on assignment to go behind the scenes of the **Oprah Winfrey show** in Chicago and *Cosmopolitan* magazine in New York. Perhaps my biggest on-air challenge was running a marathon in Washington, D.C. as part of a series on fitness!

## Recognition

Being on TV also means you are an **instant celebrity** in your viewing area. People recognize you in grocery stores and restaurants (and usually will tell you how much different you look in person).

You'll be asked to speak at Rotary Club meetings, ride in local parades and cook chili for charity. I've even been in a wheelbarrow race that involved milking a goat! Your life will become public domain. If you get married or have a baby, the viewers will want to see video of the event. Clips of my wedding and honeymoon were shown on TV and I probably got more comments on those events than **any other story of my career!**

