



SCHOOL GAMES

Sport Reporter



YOUR GUIDE TO SPORTS REPORTING IN SCHOOL AND BEYOND

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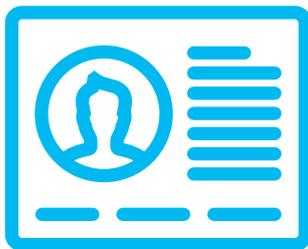
HAVE YOU EVER DREAMT OF BECOMING A SPORTS REPORTER BUT DON'T KNOW HOW TO GET STARTED?

THIS SCHOOL GAMES' SPORTS REPORTING GUIDE IS DESIGNED TO HELP GET YOU STARTED, INCLUDING USEFUL HINTS AND TIPS TO GAIN IDEAS OF HOW TO GET INTO SPORTS JOURNALISM.

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PRESS PASS



Being a Sports Reporter is one of the few professions where you are paid to learn. The research and reporting requires an inquiring mind, a passion for getting to the bottom of a story and learning every aspect of your topic.

With a press pass, you are allowed to enter venues and situations that are normally off limits to the public. Sports Reporters meet a range of sporting figures and often spend quality time getting to know their heroes during interviews.

Sports journalism allows you to follow the subjects and sporting topics that interest you the most, but there are a few things you need to decide first.



GETTING STARTED

FIRST OF ALL:

- What kind of sports reporting would you like to do? Would you like to do written journalism or would you like to record a pod cast? Do you have a passion for writing, blogging, photography or film making?
- Decide what excites you about sports reporting. Is it a particular sport that you are passionate about?
- Have a think about what you like to do; enjoyment is always a good place to start because you'll do much better when you're doing something that you love and care about.

Not sure? Don't worry! This guide can give you some helpful hints, tips and inspiration.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD STORY

Sports reporting is about a reporter telling a story using radio, the written word, or film. No matter what type of media you decide to choose, you always need to find a good story. What are the stories out there and what story do you want to tell?

IDEAS

Do your research on what is out there to report on;

- It could be the school sports day
- A local football match
- stories from behind the scenes of sport
- how athletes prepare
- what about the coach's point of view?
- fans' opinions
- equipment reviews
- a guide to a lesser known sport.
- Or you could follow sports people over a longer period of time to get their story.

The key is to try and find a new story that no-one else has heard of before. That makes it much more interesting for your audience.

THE FIVE W'S

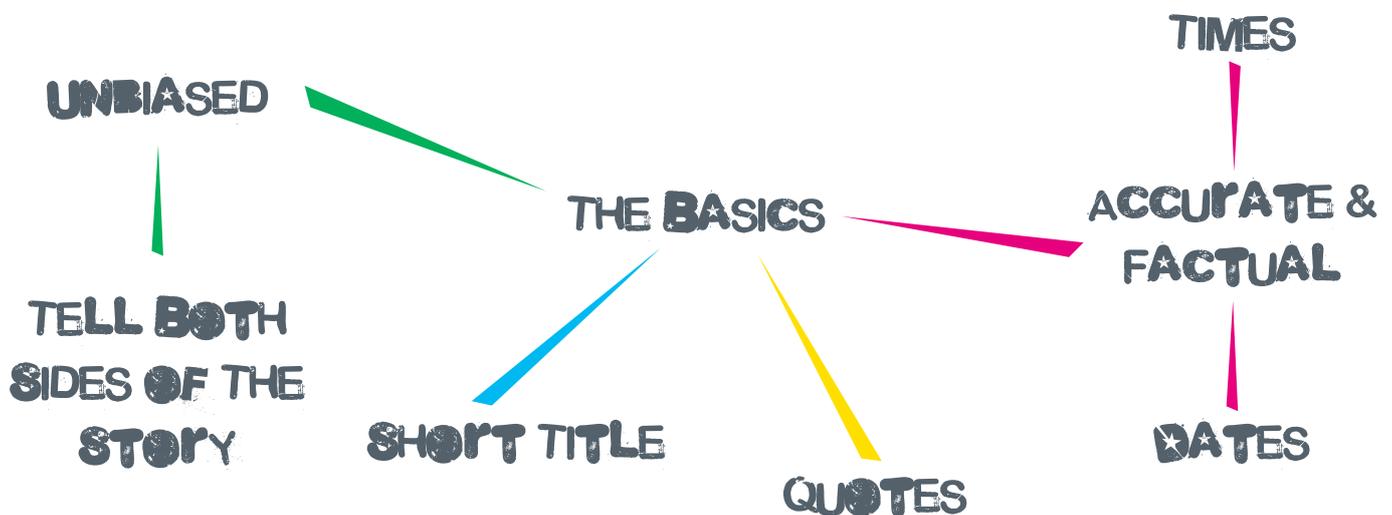
You must have a strong lead which includes: Who? What? Why? Where? When?

If you include those in your first paragraph or in your opening sequence of a film it will make your report much more interesting and intriguing to your audience.

THE BASICS OF PROFESSIONAL REPORTING:

- Make sure your media piece is accurate and factual. So always check times, dates and other key factual information about the person that you are interviewing. Above all make sure that you check your facts from at least two sources for example; you could research on the Internet or find another trusted person who can verify the information.
- Your story needs to be unbiased. You can't show favouritism towards your favourite team or player. You should get both sides of a story. Even in an opinion piece it is good to show both sides and represent a balanced point of view.
- If you are creating a title, keep it short. Five or six words are plenty and try to make it a statement about what has happened.
- Get some quotes! . So do your research, go out there and get some interviews. There are a number of ways to get them such as; you can collect quotes in person, over the phone or even by email, but in person is always best!

WHO IS INVOLVED?
WHAT'S HAPPENING?
WHY HAS IT HAPPENED?
WHERE IS IT HAPPENING?
WHEN DID IT HAPPEN?



DO YOUR RESEARCH!



RESEARCH ADVICE FROM NGUNAN ADAMU, PRODUCER & PRESENTER, BBC RADIO MERSEYSIDE.

“ The most important part of research is to fully understand the brief/story before you make a start.”

“ Always cross reference, don't solely rely on one piece of information, research is all about getting the right answer to be able to tell the right story.”

“ Research allows you to find the hidden gems .To show another angle to your story that might not have been so obvious.”

RESEARCH IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF PREPARATION.

HERE ARE OUR TOP TIPS:

- Dig deep. Always gather your information from more than one source. In other words, never trust the first web page you come to. Always check it against another source and a reputable one such as the BBC, a sports organization website or another database.
- Choose a variety of sources to research. Websites, interviews, books, magazines or old newspapers.
- Decide which type of information you need; facts and figures, quotes or dates.
- Remember, you need to have knowledge of your subject to get the most from any interviews that you conduct. The more knowledge you have, the better responses you'll get.

EQUIPMENT

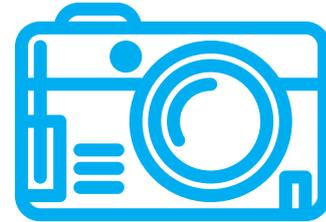
SO YOU'VE DECIDED ON YOUR STORY AND YOU'VE DONE YOUR RESEARCH. WHAT NEXT?

- Decide what type of media you will be producing (this will depend on what equipment you have access to)
- Depending upon the quality you require; filming may be done on a video camera or on your mobile phone
- You can use your phone for audio interviews, or your school may have voice recorders
- Perhaps you are confident enough to write as you interview without recording it first

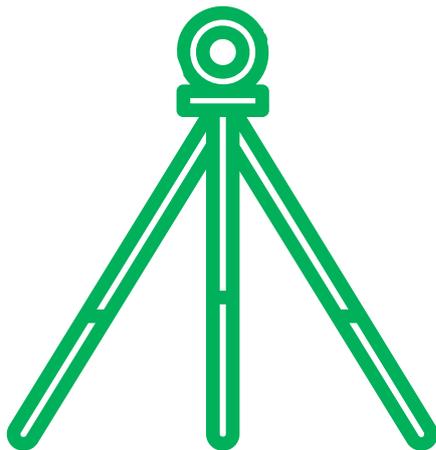
Regardless of how you record your interview, all good journalists carry a notebook to record their plans, research and make notes of answers when interviewing. One tip for sports journalists is to use a pencil. Unlike ink, it won't run on those wet days standing next to the playing fields!



CAMERA



TRIPOD

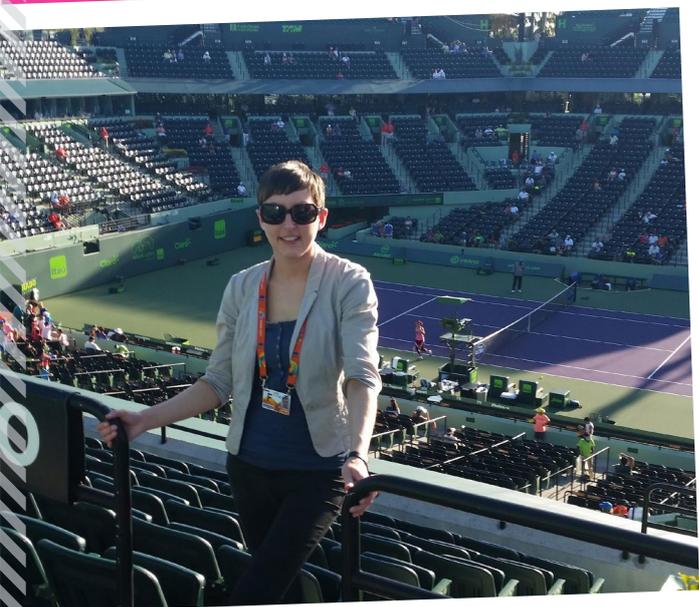


THINGS TO CONSIDER NO MATTER WHAT EQUIPMENT YOU USE:

- Always have a plan with timescales to ensure that you meet your deadline for completing and showcasing your work;
- Know how your audio or video files are transferred to your computer;
- Be very clear about how much time you will need to write up/ edit or compile your work.

REMEMBER: Your report needs to be current. If it's newsworthy it needs to get to your audience quickly, not weeks later.

INTERVIEWING



INTERVIEWING ADVICE FROM DELYTH LLOYD, BBC RADIO 5LIVE AND FINAL SCORE.

"It's always important to do research on the person/subject that you are speaking about. Ask yourself, what do I want to find out? What do I want to achieve from this interview? Doing research beforehand will make you more comfortable and it will be more unlikely that you'll be blindsided by any information that you should've known about.

Introduce yourself properly to the interviewee and make it clear as to whether the interview is live or pre-recorded.

Having a few questions ready is a good idea, but don't rigidly stick to them if the interview seems to be going in a different direction. Listening to their answers is crucial. They may say something unexpected, and there's nothing worse than missing it and continuing with your next set question!

Always remember, an interview is not about you.

INTERVIEWING: GET THE BASICS RIGHT

- Introduce yourself professionally, this puts your interviewee at ease. Say what you are doing, why you are doing it and where your work will be shown;
- Always check your equipment and have back ups of everything including batteries, SD cards, a notepad is crucial and a couple of pencils;
- Get the names and roles of your interviewees at the start of your interviews. For instance, John Smith- Coach. This may seem obvious but after a long day of talking to many people you may not remember all their names and roles. Be sure to spell their names correctly in your piece;
- When interviewing, always look your interviewee in the eyes, smile and nod occasionally. This shows you are interested and listening. Don't keep looking down at your next question on your notepad;
- Where possible learn your questions beforehand. It makes for a much more natural, confident interview. The best interviews are ones that feel like discussions;
- Keep your questions short and simple;
- Ask open questions. In other-words, don't offer the opportunity for your interviewee to give a 'yes' or a 'no ' answer ! Questions that begin with 'Why do you think...?' 'How does...?' encourage a more in-depth answer which can lead onto further questions.
- The best interviews are the ones where the interviewer listens carefully to the answers and has follow up questions about what they have just spoken about.
- For example; Interviewee: I thought we played better in the last round Interviewer: Could you please tell me a little bit more about why you think that was?
- At the end of the interview, always thank your interviewee for their time and shake hands. There's a good chance they will remember you next time you meet up!

TOP TIP

Pick out 'prompt' words from your questions to help you remember the whole question. For example, here are three questions:

- (i) Could you please talk me through that performance?
- (ii) Can you describe in detail your feelings at this moment?
- (iii) What's next for you?

The 'prompt' words could be: Performance, Feelings, Next.

RECORDING AUDIO INTERVIEWS

ESSENTIAL CHECK LIST FOR RECORDING AUDIO INTERVIEWS:

- Check your equipment. Record a short piece and play it back;
- If you can plug in headphones, wear them, to check the sound levels;
- Keep checking battery levels and double check that you are actually recording. There is nothing worse than getting back into the classroom to find nothing has recorded!
- Don't be frightened to pause an interview if there is a technical fault. Just be open and honest with your interviewee. If it can't be fixed you can always use a mobile phone's voice recorder or your notepad to capture the interview (always have a backup solution, just in case.);
- Make a note of where the recording is on your equipment for when you transfer it onto your computer to edit.



AUDIO



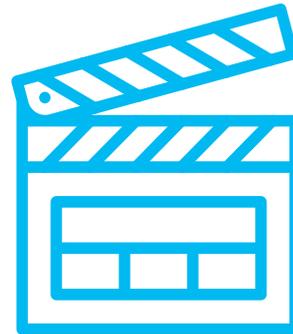
FILMING AN INTERVIEW OR VOX POP

IT'S TIME TO PUT ALL YOUR SKILLS TOGETHER!

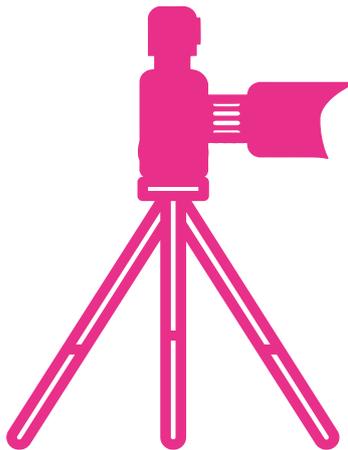
1. PREPARING QUESTIONS FOR THE INTERVIEW OR VOX POP:

- A Vox Pop is when you ask one question and gather lots of responses. For example, who do you think will win the Tour de France and why?
- An interview involves a range of questions designed to gather a more detailed response from one or two interviewees. For example;
 - (i) What conditions will suit Team Sky at the Tour de France?
 - (ii) Can you highlight any particular stages where they may be strong as a team?
 - (iii) Who will be the main threats to Team Sky?

VOX POP



SET-UP



2. SETTING UP EQUIPMENT CORRECTLY AND SAFELY.

Tripod

- Where possible always try and use a tripod to give a steady shot. If you don't have one, you can always try steadying your camera on a solid surface,
- Always extend the tripod starting from the bottom of the three legs,
- If your tripod has a spirit level, use it to make sure the shot is level!

Camera

- If using a tripod, make sure the camera is secure on top of the tripod,
- Check battery levels and camera memory (or SD card),
- If possible plug headphones and a microphone into the camera. Always use an external microphone where possible, it will give you much better sound than simply using the camera's built-in mic,
- Check sound levels with microphone/headphones- you want to be able to hear the microphone through the headphones.

FILMING AN INTERVIEW OR VOX POP

3. RESEARCH AND PREPARATION

- Ensure that you have fully researched and so have a good understanding of the topic or person that you are interviewing. Also, be able to explain to anyone why you are carrying out the interview/vox pops and where they will be shown. Your interviewees will want to know;
- For interviews you need three or four good questions and then be prepared to follow these up with more, depending on the answers from your interviewees.

Sometimes it's difficult to think of questions....here are a couple of tips:

- a) What do you want to find out? Something that no-one else knows? What story do you want your final piece of work to tell? Work backwards from that and think of the questions that will get the answers to tell that story.
- b) Start with key words that help the interviewee to open up about a subject. For example, "Tell me a little about...." " Describe to me....." " Tell me as much as you can about...."

4. THE INTERVIEW/VOX POP

The set-up:

- Find an interesting backdrop related to the piece/interview;
- Approach interviewees confidently and with a smile (generally, they will be more nervous than you!);
- Always be polite – shake hands to welcome, introduce yourself, brief them on your questions so they can prepare their answers, make them feel comfortable/relaxed. You can do this whilst the equipment is being set up by other members of your team;
- Make sure the camera is level with the interviewee's eyes;
- Have the interviewee take up approximately two thirds of the shot (this allows for the backdrop to help tell the story).

During the interview

- The interviewer does not want to be in the shot so setup the camera at a diagonal with the interviewer next to the camera. That way the interviewer and interviewee can look at each other but the interviewee is still facing in the direction of the camera;
- If you have a microphone, hold it out of sight of the camera;
- Ask their name and job title (for your records, and to test microphone);
- Listen and pick up details from the interview;
- To end an interview, thank your interviewee, then take down equipment safely.



VOX POP



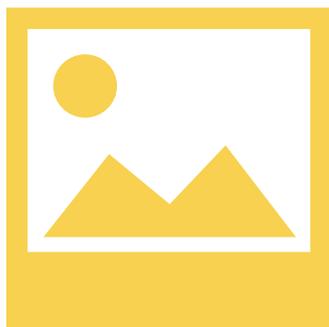
FILMING AN INTERVIEW OR VOX POP

5. SHOTS TO GO WITH YOUR INTERVIEWS/ VOX POPS

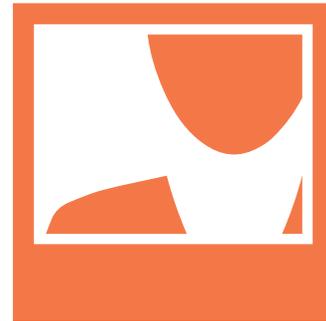
'Cut away shots' are camera shots that don't include your interviewee but help to tell the story. Ideally the cut away shots should be of the things that your interviewee is talking about (e.g. new sports facilities). When you edit your film you can show your interviewee talking about the new sports facilities then cut away to show shots of the new sports facilities. It also makes sure that your interviewee is not on camera all the time in your final edited piece, this will help to engage your viewers.

- Before you attend the interview make a list of shots that you might need to capture in order to tell your story e.g. spectators clapping, cheering, scoreboards etc;
- Take a good look at the location of your interview. This will give you an idea of where you need to be to get the best shot of the action;
- You will need to think on your feet. If a new topic is discussed in your interview, which you hadn't planned for, you will need to make a note and grab a cut away to go with it.

WIDE SHOTS



CLOSE UPS



6. TYPES OF CAMERA WORK FOR CUT AWAYS.

- These can be close ups or use wide shots which show all the action and are generally picturesque views of the location ;
- Get at least two or three shots for each scene. For example, a wide shot of the crowd then pan the crowd's faces followed by close ups of a few fans clapping. In other-words, a beginning, a middle and end to your visuals;
- Where possible always use a tripod for steady shots;
- When possible, practice your shots first. Particularly if panning across or tilting upwards/downwards. It needs to be smooth!
- Some things can't be set up and you have to just get the shot. Therefore, be aware of your surroundings and what may happen next;
- It is always useful to have a well planned shot list where possible!

NEXT STEPS, CAREER ADVICE

MOVING FROM SPORTS REPORTING AS A HOBBY INTO A CAREER.



CAREER ADVICE FROM JONNY BRAMLEY, EXECUTIVE PRODUCER MAJOR EVENTS, BBC SPORT:

“These are the qualities that BBC Sport look for in a new recruit:

- It really helps to have an inquisitive nature; an interest in the world around you;
- Don't be shy or afraid to ask the questions;
- Always be pleasant, polite and friendly. You will develop a better rapport with your interviewee if they like you;
- Good grammar and spelling is essential; if you can't get the basics right you lose credibility.”

WANT MORE EXPERIENCE?

- Experience and knowledge are key. Through school sport and your local clubs you can keep extending your knowledge and skills. Try and report regularly so that you are developing your style and advancing your skills.
- Try different skills to find out where your real interests lie. You may love writing sports reports, but may also find you have a particular talent for filming or photography. You will also find out what skills you need to develop.
- Find a platform for your work to show case the great report that you have produced. For example school newsletter, website or even create your own blogging site!
- When you have developed more advanced skills, how about approaching local sports clubs and asking if you can create some media content for them? It may be that you can interview their players leading up to a game, or tell the story of the work that they carry out in local communities. Sports clubs are always looking for volunteers to promote their work!

All this will look great on your C.V. and will help you stand out in job interviews.

But remember:

- There is no substitution for practical experience but you also need to get some classroom experience too - GCSE Media courses, Creative Media Apprenticeships, University courses;
- Talk to those in the industry- don't be shy!
- Keep a look out for work experience opportunities within media companies. Sign up to their websites and social media to see what opportunities they offer for young people.

NEXT STEPS, CAREER ADVICE

THE IMPORTANCE OF HARD WORK FROM MATT BOWCOTT, RUNNER/RESEARCHER, BBC QUESTION OF SPORT.

Matt started reporting at the age of 15 as a volunteer with The Reporters' Academy. His top tips include:

1. **WORK HARD** - be prepared to give up your time. Working in the industry won't be a standard 9 to 5 career, especially when filming or out on location.
2. **NETWORKING** - one of the most important things is to network. Get to know people outside of your team they can become a valuable source for future work and you can learn a lot from them.
3. **WORKING YOUR WAY UP**- it's great to aspire to be a producer or manager however you need to realise that you need to put the effort in and work your way up in order to get where you want to.



We hope you enjoy your sports reporting and we look forward to hearing about and seeing the unique stories that you uncover!

On the following pages you will find some session plans for your teachers which will help to support developing a sports reporting club or sports reporting activities in your school.

GOOD LUCK!

TEACHERS' SESSION GUIDE

TRY THESE SPORTS REPORTER TASKS WITH YOUR STUDENTS:

WEEK 1 – WHAT WILL YOU REPORT ON? (SESSION TIME TOTAL: APPROXIMATELY 5 HOURS)

Research

- Research a school sports event that you could attend
- What stories are you going to tell? Is there a brief to follow?
- Who would you like to interview?
- Who or what would you like to film?

Read articles, listen to pod casts and watch films that tell similar stories. similar styles.

If your team of young reporters are building up to report on the School Games, why not research:

- past athletes that have gone on to success
- School Games' athletes to watch
- an understanding of each sport and the rules
- young athletes that have competed from your area at the School Games
- find out about your local sports clubs who can tell you more about these sports.

Skills

Choose a sport or sporting story that you can produce a piece on each session. Here are some ideas in school;

- a school match
- interview a player e.g, PE teacher, coach
- collect a range of viewpoints on a particular sporting issue
- tell the story about the training commitments of an athlete in your school
- produce a report on the benefit of sport in school and outside of school

Suggested activities:

- Draw up a series of questions that you would like to ask and try them out on other reporters in the group;
- Practice using your equipment, a voice recorder or phone to record your questions;
- Learn how to edit audio on your computer using a resource such as Audacity;
- Make sure you know how to get your practice interviews from recorder/ phone to computer.

Action

- Produce a media piece, write it up or make a pod cast
- Let others in your group give you feedback on your piece

WEEK 2 – GET OUT THERE! (SESSION TIME TOTAL: APPROXIMATELY 5 HOURS APPROXIMATELY 5 HOURS)

Research

- Vox pops – think of current questions you can ask which everyone has an opinion on, e.g. Which sports should our school include in the curriculum?
- Who are you going to ask and when? You will need at least 6 different voices which represent the field that you are researching including,. male, female, different ages and accents etc.

Skills

- Choose a camera or voice recorder for this task
- Learn how to setup a camera on a tripod for a one-on-one interview. Practise in groups of threes. Camera, sound, interviewer then swap roles.
- Learn simple editing skills on your computer. Especially cutting, transitions and sound levels. Work with the media department to help you on this (if needed)

Action

- Go out and capture your vox pops
- Edit them into an audio or visual piece
- Showcase and feedback

WEEK 3 & 4 – CREATE A THREE MINUTE FILM (SESSION TIME TOTAL: APPROXIMATELY 10 HOURS)

Research

- Decide what story you would like to tell that will be interesting to others
- Make a production plan – this should include interviews, interviewees, places to film, shot list, timescales for interviews, filming and editing
- Get someone to check the plan. Invite a local journalist or broadcaster to look it over and to give a masterclass
- Seek any necessary permissions that are needed to film and interview

Skills

- Learn and practice how to take different camera shots e.g.how to pan, tilt, take wide and tight shots
- Take shots that tell the story of what your interviewees are talking about

Action

- Don't shoot too much footage, no more than 12 minutes to edit down to 3 minutes
 - Showcase and feedback
- Remember to document and showcase your journey. We look forward to seeing your student's work.

HAPPY SPORTS REPORTING!



**SCHOOL
GAMES**

