

Sport reporting masterclass with Sonali Shah, BBC Sport and Newsround presenter: key points

- Make sure you do your preparation before your report on an event. It will mean you really know what you're reporting on and make everything else much easier.
- You can divide your research into three areas:
 1. the athlete/players/teams who you will be reporting on. For example, if you were reporting on the men's 100m at the Olympics, you would want to find out lots of facts and statistics about Usain Bolt, but also his main rivals like Tyson Gay and Asafa Powell. It would also be good to know some good information about the British sprinters involved as well.
 2. the sport you are covering. So you should find out about the history of 100m – perhaps previous world records or big stars of the past.
 3. the event you are reporting on. So in this example, look back at previous Olympic Games and who was involved, especially the most recent one in 2008.
- You don't have to know everything, but pick out the most important and interesting facts and write them down on cards to help you learn them.
- Think about the audience you expect to be watching your reports. Do you need to explain the rules of the sport, or will they already know them?
- Make sure you are fair with your reporting. Just because you support, for example, Arsenal, doesn't mean that everyone watching, reading or hearing your report will, so they want a balanced account of the game, not a biased view from an Arsenal fan!
- Think about how to tell the story – it doesn't just have to be sporting action. You can try to interview the players or athletes, or what about people close to them like their parents or their coach?
- Have a think about what kind of report you are producing. If it's a radio or written web piece, you might need to be more descriptive because people can't see what you are seeing.
- Don't forget the value of 'behind-the-scenes' reporting – show people what it's like to report on a big event, or talk to someone who works in an interesting role at the event. It could be a steward, a physio, a match-day announcer – all these people have an insight into the event or the players.
- Sport reporting isn't just about the sport! Some events are interesting because of what the fans are wearing, or things that are going on away from the action so don't miss out on reporting on them!
- You don't have to be at the event to report on it. There is limited room for media at big events, but there are great stories to report on even if you aren't on the scene. Think about different ways you can cover the event, perhaps by talking to people who are involved in the story in some way.
- If you are at an event, there are also inventive and creative ways to cover events. Think about how you could make your report stand out from the crowd.
- Reporting on the Olympics and Paralympics isn't just about being able to report on the action taking place – think about other aspects like the torch relay or local training camps that you might be able to cover.