

WHEN IS SCIENCE NEWSWORTHY?

A GUIDE FOR RESEARCHERS AND
COMMUNICATORS

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Use this guide to determine if a scientific finding is likely to be newsworthy. These criteria are not exhaustive and are just a guide; they're not hard and fast rules. Exceptions happen all the time!

Science makes it into the news when the findings:

- Are new discoveries
- Are unusual or counterintuitive
- Significantly advance the field
- Relate to current events, landmarks, or history
- Impact our lives
- Change our understanding of the universe
- Appeal to the senses (have an interesting visual or auditory component)
- Establish a new record
- Are superlative (best, oldest, longest, deepest)
- Fun, amusing, or weird
- Present or solve a mystery

Science DOES NOT make it into the news when the findings:

- Are incremental advances
- Represent modeling studies
- Improve current models or techniques
- Confirm what is already known
- Summarize the latest in a field
- Have already been reported in the news
- Show no correlation between variables (a non-story)

Another way to determine a result's newsworthiness

Imagine a person's emotional reaction to the story. Would they feel any of the following? If so, it's likely newsworthy.

Awe

- Curiosity piqued
- 'Gee whiz!'
- Solved mysteries
- New records
- Weird, odd things

Amusement

- Humor
- Appeal to senses

Anxiety/Anger

- Negative impact on our lives
- Controversy
- Injustice