



## Special Coverage (4 minutes or less)

The **Special Coverage** contest focuses on producing an in-depth, engaging, and well-executed broadcast segment that covers a significant event, person, or issue. The segment should go beyond basic reporting, offering viewers detailed insights, multiple perspectives, and comprehensive storytelling in a concise format of 4 minutes or less. Special Coverage should be compelling, informative, and structured to keep the audience's attention while effectively delivering the key points of the story.

### Key Elements of Special Coverage (4 minutes or less):

#### 1. In-Depth Reporting:

- The primary focus of special coverage is **thorough reporting**. The segment should explore the event, issue, or person in detail, offering more than just surface-level information. It should provide context, background, and a well-rounded view of the subject matter.
- **Research** and **preparation** are essential to ensure the coverage includes accurate information and relevant facts.
- Example: If covering a local school election, the special coverage should include details about the candidates, their platforms, the significance of the election, and its potential impact on the school community.

#### 2. Multiple Perspectives:

- A hallmark of strong special coverage is the inclusion of **multiple viewpoints**. The segment should feature interviews or commentary from a variety of sources—such as experts, participants, witnesses, or community members—to give the audience a more comprehensive understanding of the topic.
- By showcasing diverse opinions, the coverage becomes more balanced and credible.
- Example: For a report on a school policy change, the special coverage might include interviews with school administrators, teachers, and students to capture different perspectives.

#### 3. Engaging Visuals and B-Roll:

- **Visual storytelling** is crucial in special coverage. The use of b-roll (background footage) should enhance the segment by visually supporting the narration and interviews. Footage of the event, key locations, or relevant action can add depth to the story.
- High-quality, well-composed video clips are important for maintaining viewer interest and making the broadcast feel professional.
- Example: If covering a community event, the special coverage could include b-roll of attendees, event activities, and behind-the-scenes moments, all of which visually support the story being told.

#### 4. Interviews and Sound Bites:

- **Interviews** are a key component of special coverage. The interviews should be conducted professionally and edited to include the most insightful and impactful sound bites.



- **Sound bites** should be used strategically to reinforce key points and give a personal or emotional connection to the story. Interviews should be well-integrated into the narrative, with the on-air talent providing context or transitions between sound bites.
  - Example: In a story about a school fundraiser, interviews with organizers, students, and beneficiaries of the fundraiser provide various viewpoints and humanize the event.
5. **Narrative Structure and Storytelling:**
- The special coverage should follow a clear **narrative structure** that keeps the viewer engaged from beginning to end. The story should have a clear **introduction, middle, and conclusion**, with logical transitions between different segments or interviews.
  - The **introduction** should grab the audience's attention, the **body** should develop the key points with detailed reporting and analysis, and the **conclusion** should summarize the coverage or look toward the future.
  - Example: The introduction might present the significance of a school's new athletic facility, the body could explore how it will be used and the challenges in getting it built, and the conclusion could reflect on what this means for the school's future.
6. **Conciseness and Time Management:**
- Special coverage should be **concise** and **well-paced**, fitting within the 4-minute time limit without feeling rushed or incomplete. Every second counts, so it's important to focus on the most important aspects of the story and avoid unnecessary filler.
  - Each segment of the coverage (e.g., intro, interviews, b-roll, conclusion) should have enough time to develop but should not drag out unnecessarily.
  - Example: In a 4-minute segment about a cultural event, the story should quickly establish why the event is significant, offer relevant details and perspectives, and conclude with its impact on the community.
7. **Use of Graphics and Text:**
- **Graphics** and **text overlays** (such as lower thirds) can be used to clarify information, reinforce key points, or provide additional context. These should be professional and easy to read, enhancing the story without distracting from the content.
  - Graphics may include statistics, dates, names of interviewees, or other important information that supports the narrative.
  - Example: During an interview with a guest, a lower-third graphic might appear, showing the guest's name and title to give context to their comments.
8. **On-Air Talent and Presentation:**
- The **on-air talent** (if present) should deliver the content with professionalism and clarity. The presenter should appear knowledgeable about the topic and guide the audience smoothly through the story.
  - The talent should also maintain an engaging tone, using appropriate body language and vocal modulation to keep the audience interested.



- Example: In a story about a school protest, the on-air talent might appear on location, offering insights about the protest's significance and interviewing key participants.
9. **Balance Between Visual and Verbal Content:**
- The segment should strike a **balance** between what is being shown on screen (b-roll, graphics, etc.) and what is being spoken by the presenter or interviewees. The visuals should complement the story and not overwhelm or undercut the spoken narrative.
  - The script and visuals should be well-coordinated so that they work together to tell the story, not just repeat the same information.
  - Example: While a student talks about the impact of a new library on their studies, b-roll might show students using the facility, making the segment visually engaging while supporting the narrative.
10. **Emotional Appeal and Human Interest:**
- The best special coverage often has an element of **human interest** or **emotional appeal**. By focusing on how the event or issue affects individuals or the community, the segment becomes more relatable and compelling to the audience.
  - Including personal stories, reactions, or emotional moments helps viewers connect with the content on a deeper level.
  - Example: In a story about a charity event, highlighting how a student's life was positively impacted by the fundraiser can create an emotional connection with the audience.
11. **Conclusion and Call to Action:**
- The **conclusion** of the special coverage should neatly wrap up the segment. This might include summarizing the key points, reflecting on the significance of the event or issue, or offering a forward-looking statement.
  - If relevant, a **call to action** can be included, such as encouraging viewers to attend an upcoming event or get involved with the community issue being discussed.
  - Example: "With the funds raised at this year's event, even more students will have access to scholarships. If you'd like to contribute, visit the school's website for more information."
12. **Technical Quality:**
- The technical quality of the broadcast should be high. This includes clear, crisp **audio**, well-lit **visuals**, and smooth **editing**. Any graphics used should be sharp and professional, and transitions between segments should be seamless.
  - Avoid distracting elements such as shaky camera work, poor lighting, or inconsistent sound levels.
  - Example: Ensure that interviews are well-mic'd so the audio is clear, and that the b-roll footage is steady and properly framed.

**Criteria for Judging:**

- **Depth and Thoroughness:** How well the special coverage explores the topic with comprehensive and accurate information.



- **Narrative Structure:** The clarity of the storytelling and the use of a well-organized structure (introduction, body, conclusion).
- **Engagement and Emotional Appeal:** How well the coverage keeps the audience engaged and whether it connects with viewers on an emotional or human-interest level.
- **Visual and Audio Quality:** The overall technical quality of the broadcast, including clear visuals, crisp audio, and professional use of b-roll and graphics.
- **Interviews and Multiple Perspectives:** The inclusion and quality of interviews and diverse viewpoints to provide a well-rounded view of the topic.
- **Pacing and Time Management:** How effectively the special coverage fits within the 4-minute time limit while delivering a complete and engaging story.
- **On-Air Talent and Presentation:** The professionalism and effectiveness of the on-air talent (if applicable) in guiding the audience through the story.

In summary, the **Special Coverage (4 minutes or less)** contest challenges students to produce an in-depth, professional broadcast segment that covers a significant event, issue, or person. It emphasizes comprehensive reporting, clear storytelling, high-quality visuals, and the ability to engage viewers with a concise yet thorough exploration of the subject.