

Writing popular science communication articles

CRASC - 11/05/2026



Criteria for newsworthiness and news values

•The values closest to everyday practice and thus to the concreteness of professional technique are SIX belonging to THREE categories:

1) AN ESSENTIAL VALUE

For the newsworthiness of a fact, it **MUST** always be present

2) THREE CONSTITUTIVE VALUES

For the newsworthiness of a fact, at least **ONE MUST** be present

3) TWO ADDITIONAL VALUES

For the newsworthiness of a fact, they are only **OPTIONAL** and **ENHANCE** the significance of a news story

News-value: the essential value

01

It is the novelty of
the fact

02

The news is only
such once

03

It can give rise to
other news that
constitutes the
developments of
the situation

News value: the constitutive values

- The uniqueness and originality of the fact
 - Evaluation according to the cultural background of the audience (the man who bites the dog)
 - The importance that the fact has for the community
 - This significance highlights the scope and consequences of the event:
 - Indirect and general consequences (stock market fluctuations, approval of reforms)
 - Direct and practical consequences that provide useful information (consequences on daily life, such as strikes)
 - The scope of the event does NOT involve a single person, but encompasses many (tailored to the target audience)
 - The emotional weight of the event:
 - Events capable of evoking emotions that attract strong public interest (earthquakes, floods)
 - It can be heightened by its ability to create a sense of anticipation (disappearance of a child)
 - Physical/psychological proximity
 - Curiosity (known and famous people)
-

News values: additional values

- The development that an event promises
- Truly important facts do not exhaust themselves in a day but rather provoke developments that occur in the following days over a certain period.
- The emphasis is especially placed on the assignment of the title and the designated space.
- The exclusivity.
- There is an issue of competition in delivering news ahead of others.
- The use of the conditional regarding exclusivity is necessary except in rare cases: a newspaper can never be particular of having information unknown to others, but it presumes and hopes so.
- The problem of standardization of information.



To be newsworthy, that is, to become news, an event must not only be new (an essential value), but it must also interest the public due to its uniqueness and/or its consequences for the community, and/or its emotional impact (constitutive values); if it also promises developments and/or is exclusive (additional values), it will deserve even more space.

Constructing and de-constructing the news



Building news

The starting point in the search for the most appropriate sources

Verification of scientific validity

Research of the scientific fact/event

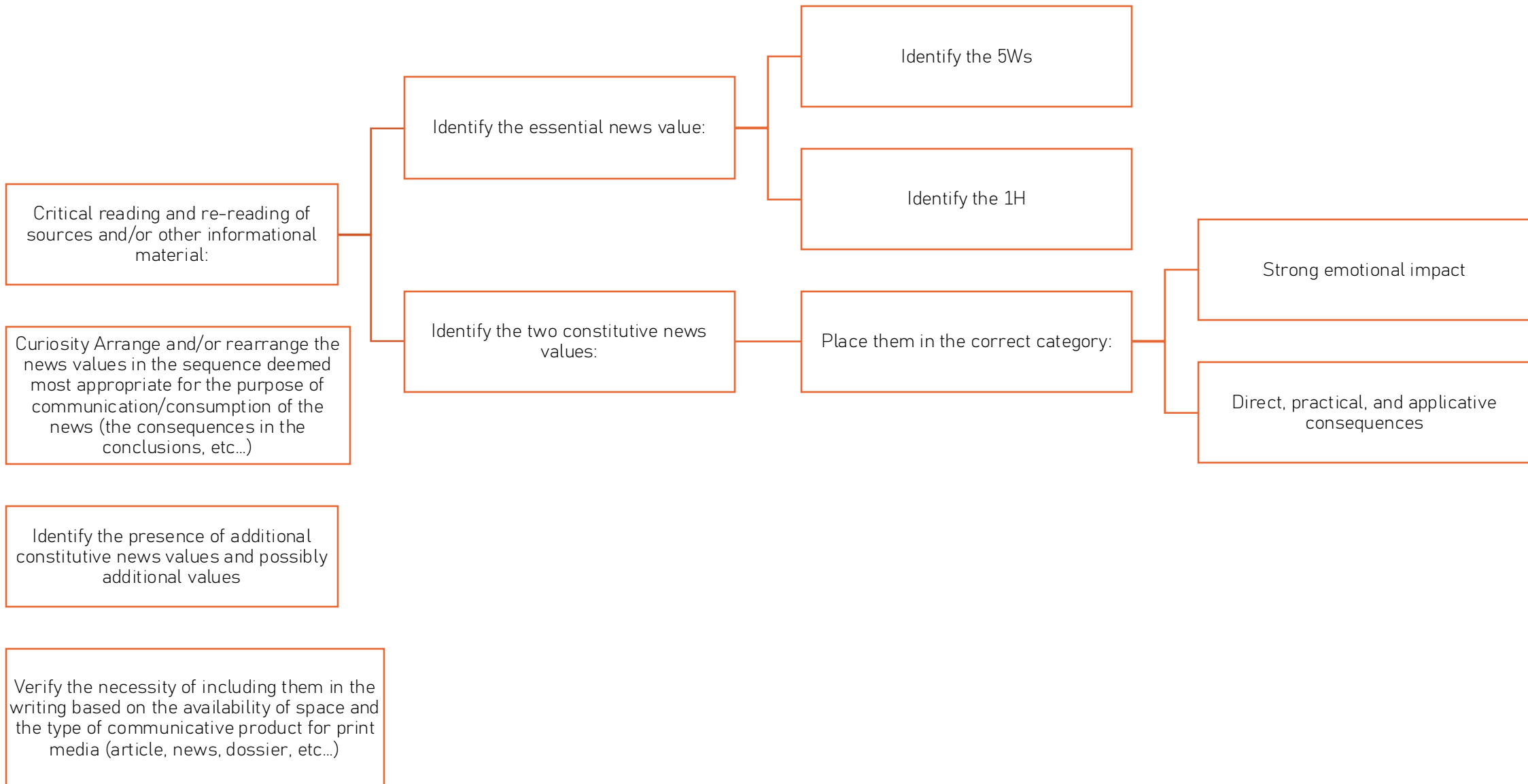
Assessment of the newsworthiness of the fact:

Does it meet the criteria of novelty?

If the fact is newsworthy and/or meets the criteria for newsworthiness:

Researching the news from other sources of scientific information

Evaluation of the transition from fact to news



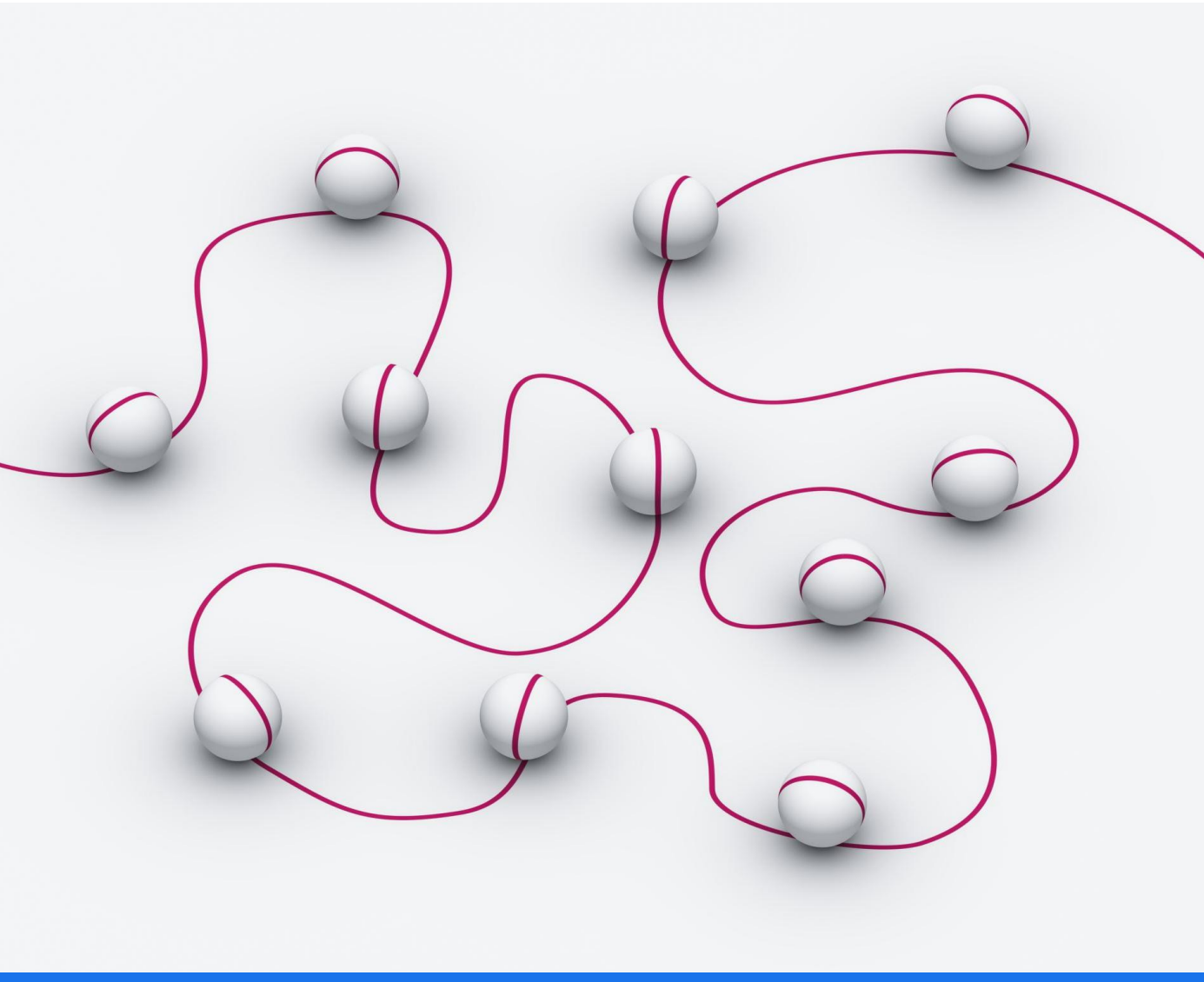
Build the conceptual map, a reference framework for writing the news.

- Identify the informational nodes and the corresponding contents using the data from the previous analysis.
 - An informational node clarifies the content corresponding to a news value.
 - Each node can be constructed independently of the others.
- The connections with the other informational nodes create the conceptual map.

Determine the mode of presentation for the different nodes (some can also be expressed in a photo with the corresponding caption).

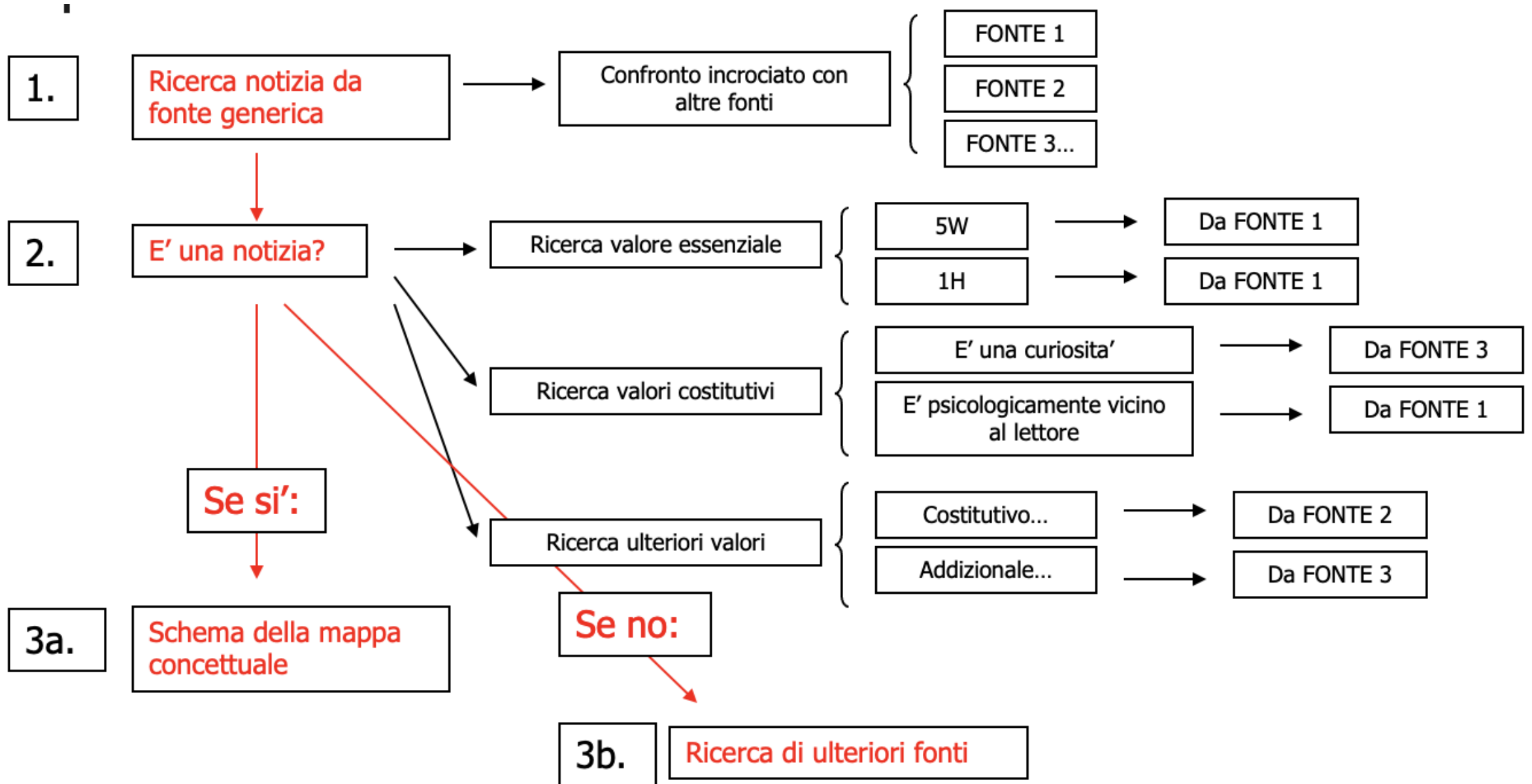
The set of conceptual nodes constitutes the conceptual map.

- In print communication, the map is presented linearly, although there can be cross-linkages between the different conceptual nodes.



Try to write a first draft of the text:

- The conceptual map clarifies the information and translates it for the audience.
- Remember the target audience.
- Keep in mind the space constraints (length of the piece).
- Always start with the introduction.
- Include the title, subtitle, and a summary or abstract at the end of the draft.



NODO CONCETTUALE/INFORMATIVO	LIVELLO DI TESTO/MODALITA'	FONTE
VALORE ESSENZIALE	ATTACCO	Da FONTE 1
1.o valore costitutivo	Segue attacco per la vicinanza fisica con il lettore	Da FONTE 3
2.o valore costitutivo	Foto scienziati e box loro attivita' scientifica	Da FONTE 2
3.o valore costitutivo	Spiegazione esperimento	Da FONTE 3
Valore addizionale	Conclusioni	Da FONTE 1



1) Identify the introduction and conclusion



2) Highlight the use of scientific/technical terminology (look for words with meanings distant from common sense or narrative strategies used for their simplification)



3) Identify the target audience

De-constructing news: Text analysis

Building the conceptual map



Identifying the textual/iconographic apparatus (use of boxes, photos, in-depth analyses)



Dividing the text into its conceptual nodes (considering the surrounding materials)



Associating the corresponding news value



CONCEPTUAL NODES	TEXTUAL LOCATION AND MEANING	NEWS VALUE
An important scientific result	ATTACK	ESSENTIAL
...

Searching for the news resources

NEWS VALUE	RESOURCE	COMMENTS
ESSENTIAL	SCIENTIFIC ARTICLE	MISSING HOW
...



KINDS OF SCIENTIFIC NEWS FOR PUBLIC COMMUNICATION

LONG ARTICLE: 4500 characters

BRIEF ARTICLE: 3000 characters

NEWS: 2000 characters

CURIOSITY BOX: 1500 characters