

Climate Change News Coverage Rubric:

Criteria	1: Emerging	2: Proficient	3: Excelling
Uses information to effectively to make readers or viewers aware of an extreme weather or fire event and its important details (What is happening).	Communicates and organizes information from sources. The information is not yet synthesized, so the intended purpose is not fully achieved. ¹ Readers or viewers have incomplete understanding of what is happening.	Communicates, organizes and synthesizes information from sources. Intended purpose is achieved. ² Readers or viewers understand what is happening.	Communicates, organizes and synthesizes information from sources to fully achieve a specific purpose, with clarity and depth. ³ Readers or viewers have a clear and complete understanding of what is happening.
Effectively and directly links the event to climate change (Why it is happening).	The event is either not linked to climate change or climate change is cited as a possible explanation or contributing factor. The article takes a “both sides” approach and offers a non-scientific contrarian viewpoint (as opposed to scientific ambiguity or uncertainty) i.e., the event was wholly due to natural factors or climate change played little or no role. Descriptions of any linkage to climate change may be inaccurate.	Mentions climate change, but the linkage is not direct. Climate change may be expressed as a conclusion of scientists or others, but is not framed as a fact. The overall linkage between climate change and the event is soft. Example: <i>Although wildfires occur throughout the West every year, scientists see the influence of climate change in the extreme heat waves that have contributed to the intensity of fires this summer. Prolonged periods of abnormally high temperatures are a signal of a shifting climate, they say.</i> ⁴	Climate change is directly linked to the event. Climate change is framed as a fact. There is no ambiguity for the reader to infer that climate change was not involved in driving or contributing to or enhancing the event. Example: <i>By the time Hurricane Ida made landfall in Port Fourchon, La., on Sunday, it was the poster child for a climate change-driven disaster... “This is exactly the kind of thing we’re going to have to get used to as the planet warms,” said Kerry Emanuel, an atmospheric scientist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology who studies the physics of hurricanes and their connection to the climate.</i> ⁵
Explicitly informs readers or viewers of the role fossil fuels and the fossil fuel industry play in driving climate change (Who/What is responsible).	The human role in climate change is not referenced. No mention of fossil fuels, the fossil fuel industry, or human activities is made.	Mentions anthropogenic or human-induced climate change. Does not explicitly reference the role fossil fuels, the fossil fuel industry, or other human activities are playing. Example: <i>“All available evidence taken together, including physical understanding, observations over a larger region and different regional climate models give high confidence that human-induced climate change has increased the likelihood and intensity of such an event to occur and these changes will continue in a rapidly warming climate,” researchers concluded.</i> ⁶	Directly links fossil fuels, the fossil fuel industry, or other human activities to climate change. Examples: <i>According to the United Nations’ latest climate report, warming from fossil fuel use and other human activities is likely behind an increase in the number of high intensity hurricanes in the past 40 years.</i> ⁷ <i>“The increase can be 100% attributed to the burning of fossil fuels,” says Dr Friederike Otto, associate director of the Environmental Change Institute at the University of Oxford.</i> ⁸

Useful sources of information:

- The IPCC's 6th Assessment Report and Materials: <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/>
- SciLine Quick Facts: <https://www.sciline.org/resource-list/climate-communication/>
- World Weather Attribution: <https://www.worldweatherattribution.org/analysis/projects/>

Endnotes:

¹ Association of American Colleges & Universities, Information Literacy Value Rubric, 2009.

² Association of American Colleges & Universities, Information Literacy Value Rubric, 2009.

³ Association of American Colleges & Universities, Information Literacy Value Rubric, 2009.

⁴ Neil Vigdor and Thomas Fuller, "Evacuations ordered near Lake Tahoe as the Caldor Fire chokes region," *The New York Times*, August 30, 2021.

⁵ Sarah Kaplan, "How climate change helped make Hurricane Ida one of Louisiana's worst," *The Washington Post*, August 30, 2021.

⁶ Zack Budryk, "Climate change increasing chances for deadly flooding in western Europe: report," *The Hill*, August 24, 2021.

⁷ Sarah Kaplan, "How climate change helped make Hurricane Ida one of Louisiana's worst," *The Washington Post*, August 30, 2021.

⁸ Becky Dale and Nassos Stylianou, "Climate change: World now sees twice as many days over 50C," BBC, September 13, 2021.