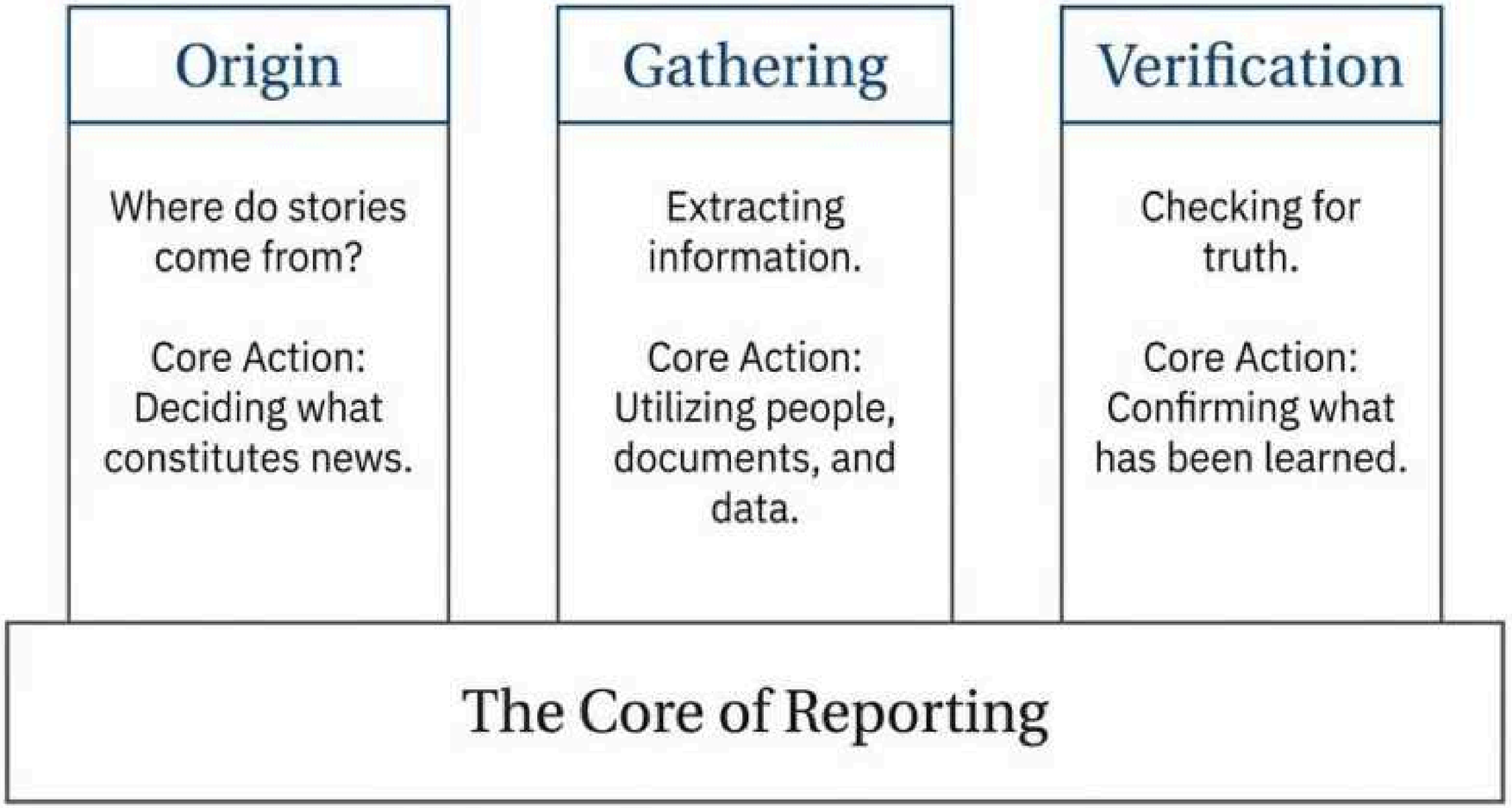
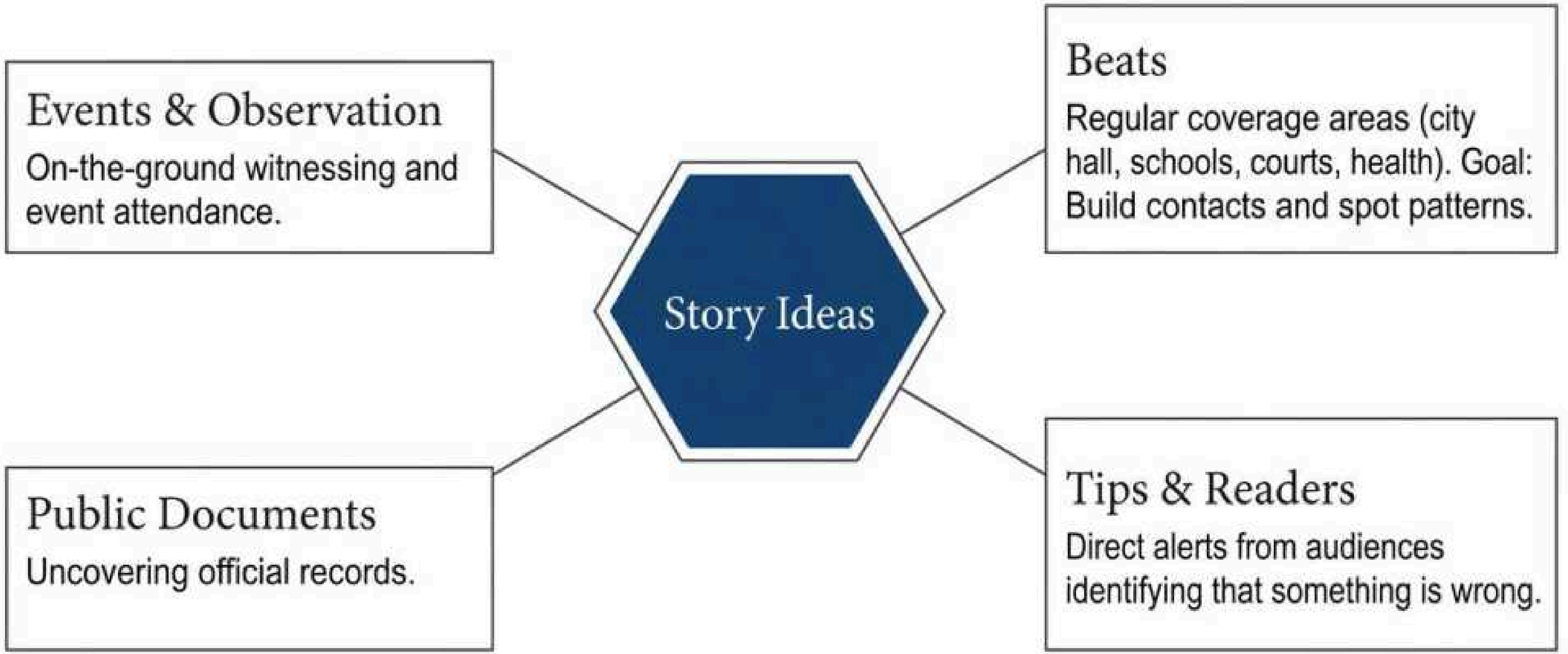
2.1



Gemini Notebook

2.2



Gemini Notebook

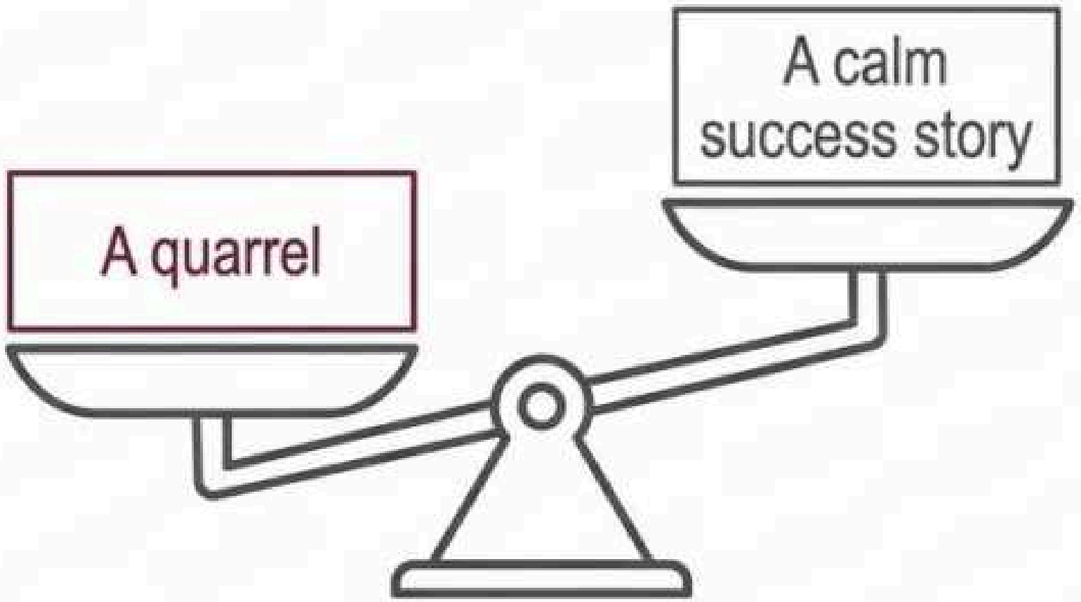
2.3

Timeliness	Is the information new?
Proximity	Is it near the audience?
Impact	How many people are affected?
Prominence	Are famous individuals involved?
Conflict	Is there a clash of forces?
Novelty	Is the event unusual?
Human Interest	Does the narrative evoke emotion?

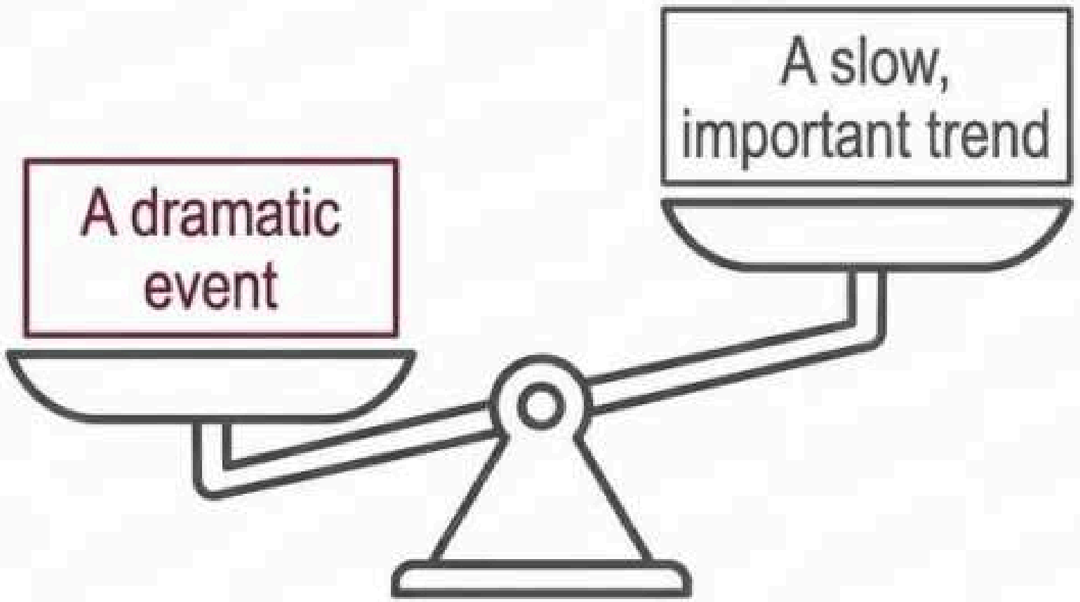
Gemini Notebook

2.4

Conflict Bias



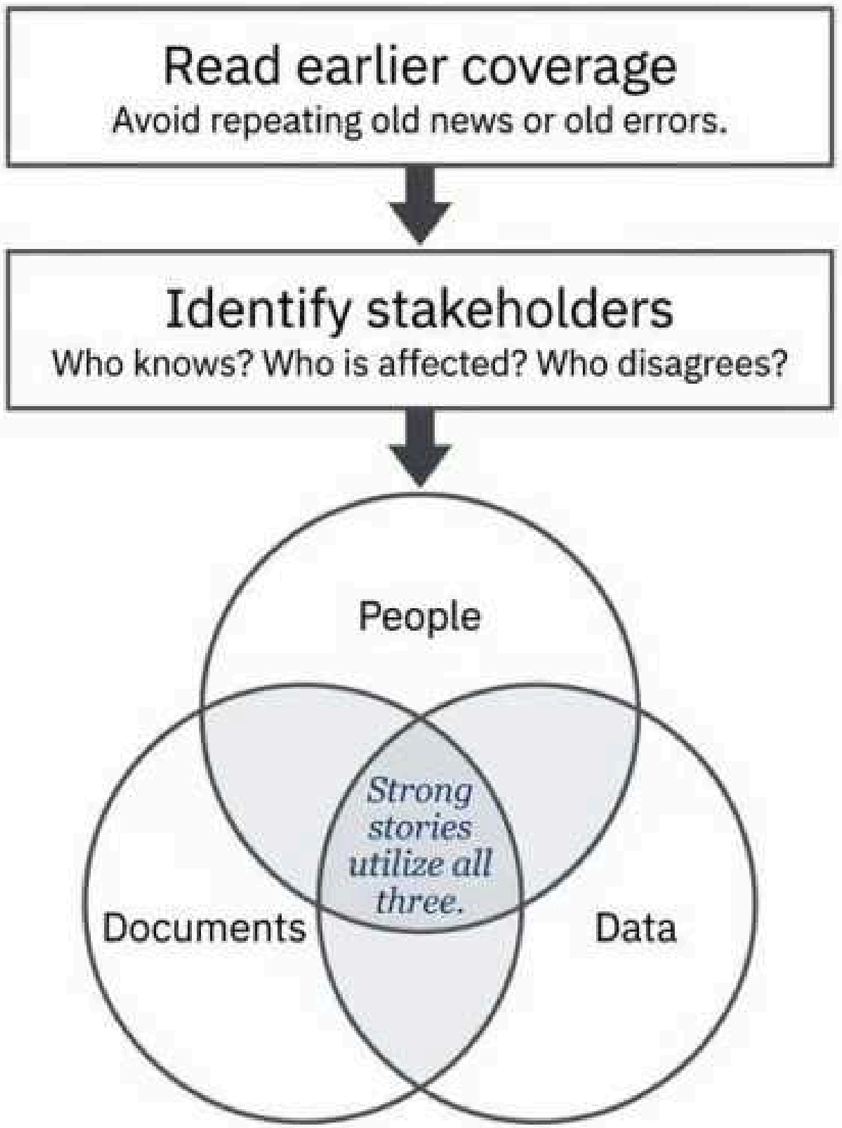
Novelty Bias



Strategic Inquiry: Good reporters analyze both what is in the news and what is missing from it.

Gemini Notebook

2.5

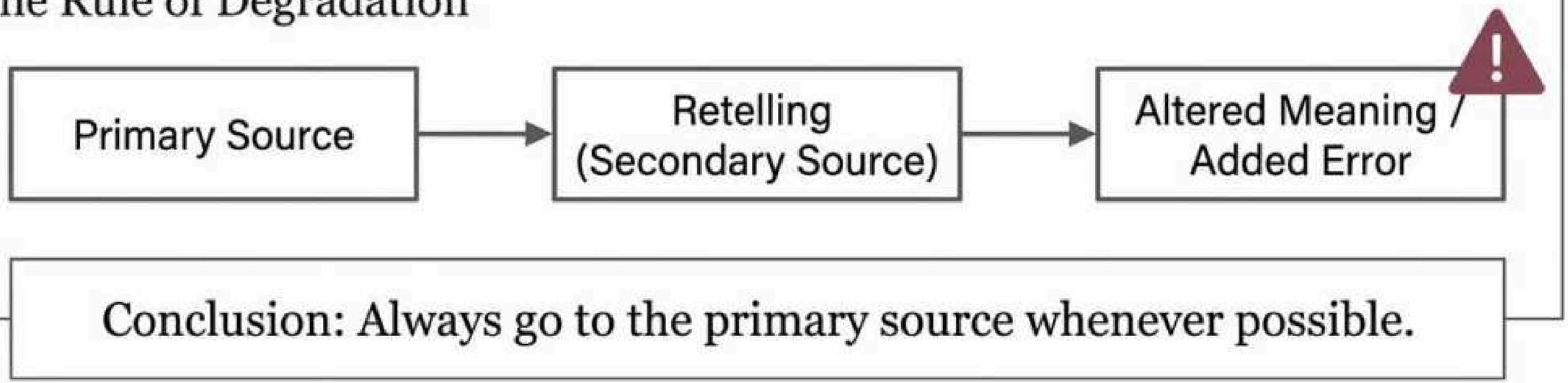


Gemini Notebook

2.6

Primary Source	Secondary Source
Firsthand accounts. Examples: Eyewitness, official record, original data.	Secondhand accounts. Example: A news article summarizing a court ruling.

The Rule of Degradation



Gemini Notebook

2.7

1. Preparation

Formulate questions in advance.

Prioritize listening over speaking.

2. Execution

Utilize open questions (how, why, tell me more) rather than yes/no questions.

Actively follow up on surprises.

3. Space

Deploy silence strategically.

Sources will naturally attempt to fill the void with useful information.

4. Conclusion

Conclude with two mandatory inquiries:

Whom else should I talk to? and
What did I not ask?

Gemini Notebook

2.8

Operational Rule: Always check recording equipment before and after. Always ask permission as a matter of professional courtesy.

One-Party Consent

Applies to:

U.S. Federal law and many state laws.

Mechanism:

Only one participant (the reporter) needs to consent to the recording.

All-Party Consent

Applies to:

Specific U.S. states.

Mechanism:

Every participant in the conversation must agree to be recorded.

International Variations

Applies to:

Other countries globally.

Mechanism:

Laws differ widely; geographic verification is strictly required.

Gemini Notebook

2.9

On the Record	On Background	Off the Record
Permissions: May use exact direct quotes. May publish the source's name.	**Permissions:** May use the information. **Constraints:** Must describe the Must describe the source only in general terms (e.g., a senior official). No specific name allowed.	**Warning:** Highly ambiguous term used differently by different sources. **Protocol:** Requires explicit, upfront agreement detailing exactly what will and will not be published before information is shared.

Gemini Notebook

2.10

Conditions for Anonymity (All three must be met):

- ☑ Information is vital.
- ☑ Information cannot be acquired through any other channel.
- ☑ The source faces real, tangible risk.

Operational Protocol

- Reporter (and often editor) must know the true identity.
- The published story must explicitly state the reason for granting anonymity.
- The anonymous claim requires backing by secondary evidence.

Warning: Overuse of anonymity weakens audience trust.

Gemini Notebook

2.11

Federal Level

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA, 1966)

Allows requests for records from federal agencies (subject to statutory exemptions).

State Level

State Public Records Laws

Individual state-level transparency statutes.

Unannounced Stories

Budgets
Court files
Inspection reports
Campaign finance filings

Gemini Notebook

2.12

Statistical Pitfalls	
Concept	Analytical Rule
Origin Check	Ask who collected it, how it was collected, and what data is omitted.
Apples to Apples	Compare rates rather than raw counts when evaluating differing populations.
Averages	Distinguish the Mean (average) from the Median (middle value).
Shifts	Distinguish a percent change from a change in percentage points.
Logic Error	Remember that two variables moving together do not prove that one causes the other (correlation does not equal causation).

Gemini Notebook

2.13

Sensory Map

Note specific details:

- Sight
- Sound
- Smell
- What people wear
- Who is present in the room

Result: Generates accuracy and vividness in the narrative.

Observer Constraints

Constraint 1: The Observer Effect

A reporter's physical presence can alter the events happening in the room.

Constraint 2: Subjectivity

A reporter's account is fundamentally just one vantage point of a larger scene.

Gemini Notebook

2.14

Micro-Verification

Check every single name, title, number, date, and spelling.

Epistemological Check

Directly ask sources how they know the information they claim to know.

Independent Confirmation

Find a second source whose knowledge does not originate from the first source.

Document Check

Always match human claims against the original document whenever one exists.

Gemini Notebook

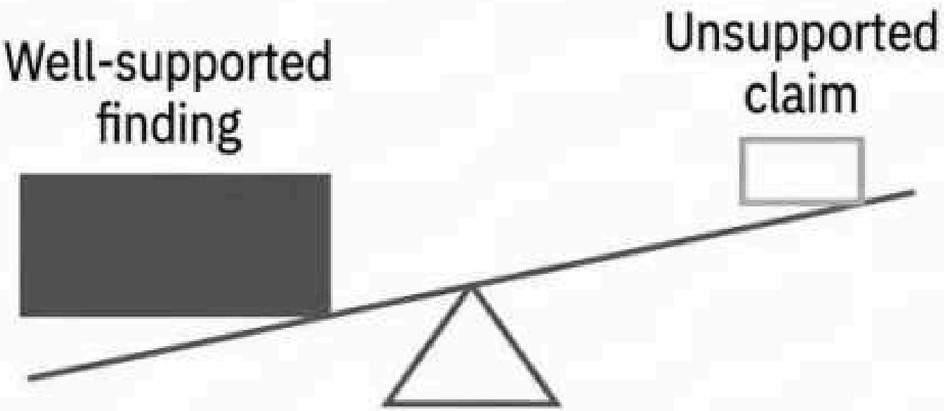
2.15

Fundamental Fairness

Viewpoint Diversity: Actively seek out different perspectives.

Right of Reply: Subjects of critical stories must be given a real chance to respond prior to publication, and that response must be reported.

The Trap of False Balance



Rule: Do not treat an unsupported claim as equal to a well-supported finding simply to appear balanced. Weigh sources by their evidence, not just by their side.

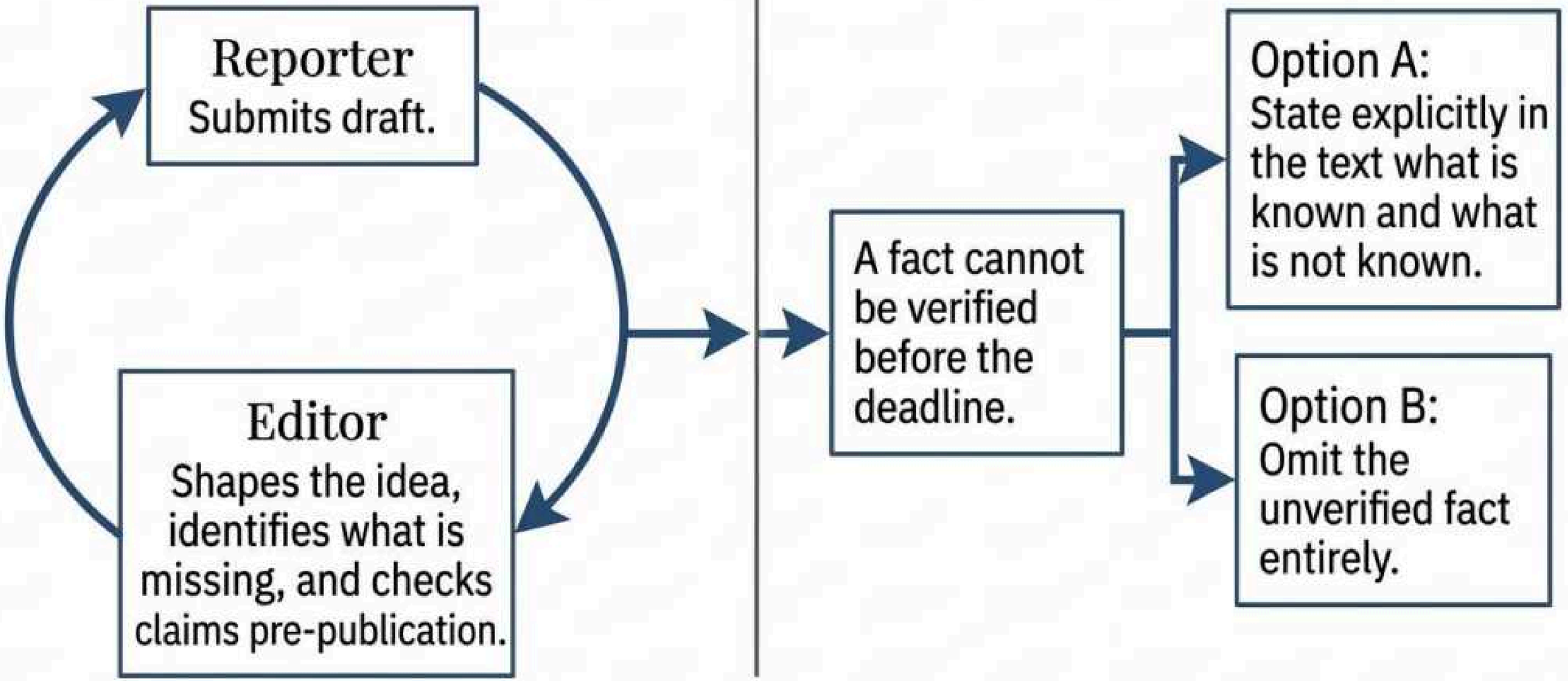
Gemini Notebook

2.16

Confirmation Bias Seeking only facts that validate a preconceived idea.	**Single-Sourcing** Leaves errors entirely uncorrected.
Press Releases Treating advocacy as if it were independent reporting.	**Official Dominance** Relying on official sources simply because they are easily accessible.
Rushing Sacrificing necessary context for the sake of speed.	**Mitigation** Utilize a formal checklist and require a second pair of eyes.

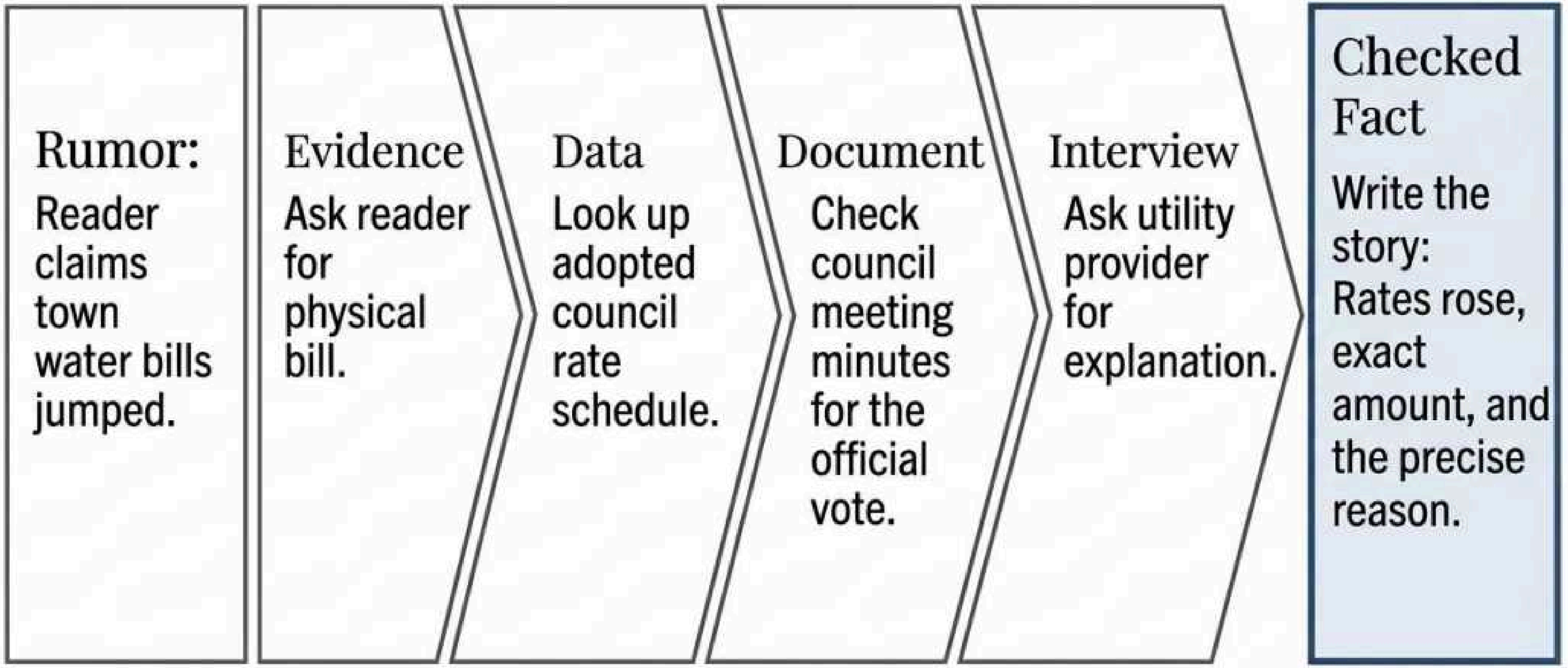
Gemini Notebook

2.17



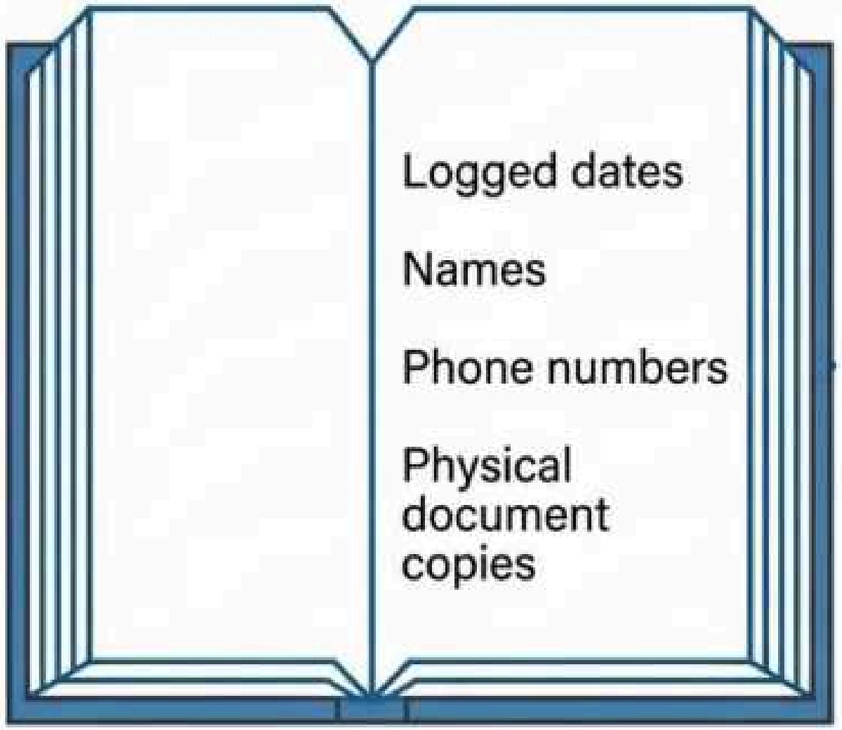
Gemini Notebook

2.18



Gemini Notebook

2.19



Purpose Checklist

- ☑ Answers editor queries (How is this fact known?)
- ☑ Defends against honest memory errors.
- ☑ Defends against false complaints from subjects.

Best Practice: Line-by-Line Fact Checking

Keep a list of every fact in a long story with its source beside it, reviewed line-by-line prior to publication.

Gemini Notebook

2.20

Exercise: Pick a local issue (e.g., a new bus route or school budget).

Identify 3 People	Identify 3 Documents	Identify 3 Pieces of Data

- ❑ Which of these sources functions as your Primary Source?
- ❑ Which specific facts from these sources will require double-verification?

Gemini Notebook