

News Sources

Rodrigo Zamith

University of Massachusetts Amherst

A news source is any person,
organization, document, or object that
provides information to journalists

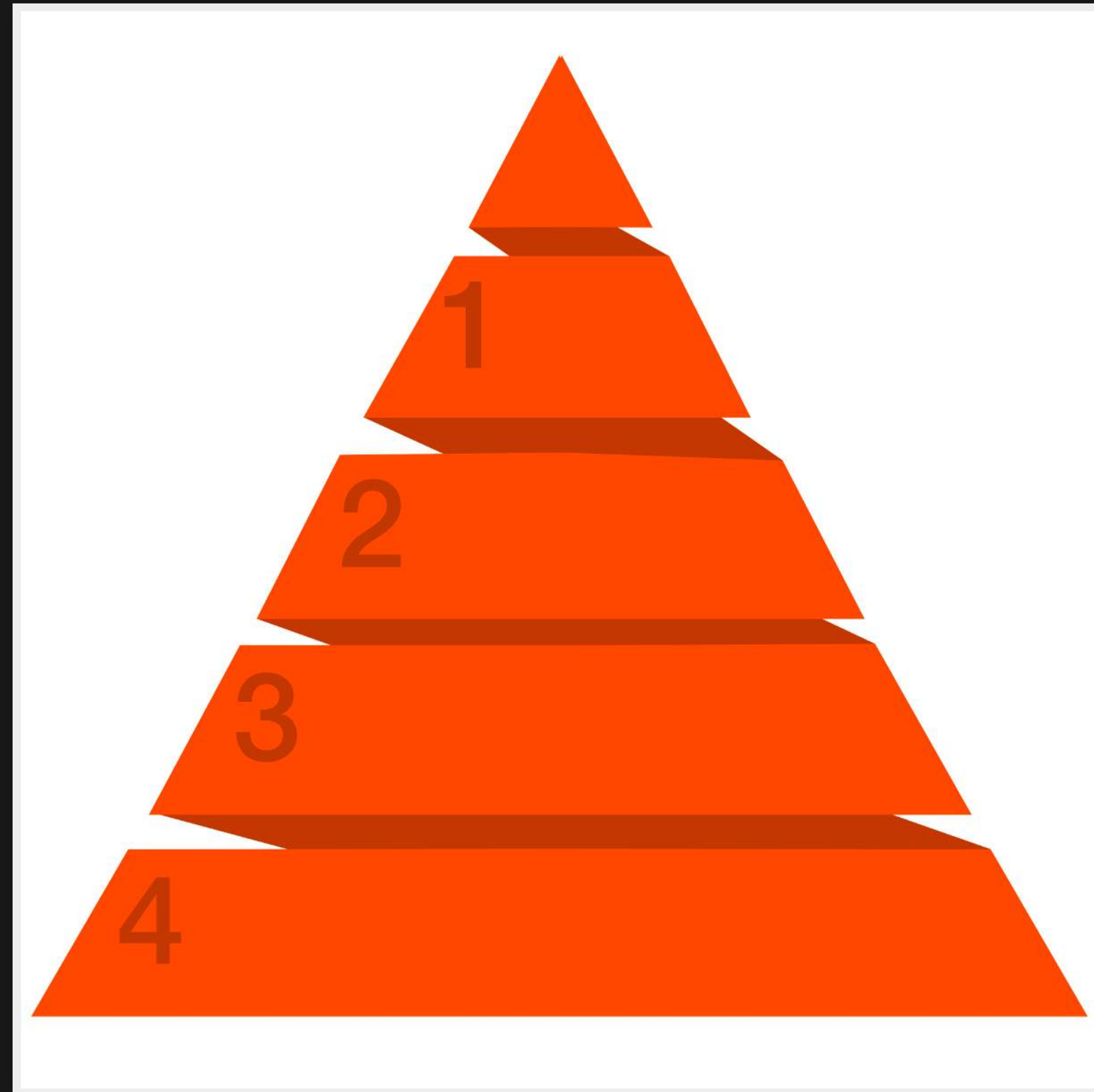
Importance of News Sources

- Journalists need sources
 - Journalists cannot observe everything first-hand
 - Journalists lack expertise in certain matters
 - Sources are sometimes the center of a story
- Sources need journalists
 - Depend on journalists to spread their views
 - Gain legitimacy by being featured in respected news media
 - Need journalists to promote their agendas
- What sources are quoted as saying is sometimes more important than what journalists write

Sourcing, Power, and Authority

- The practice of sourcing can also be thought about as an exchange of power
 - That negotiation is further implicated by notions of **reputation** and **authority**
- Journalists are more likely to receive access to (and cooperation from) sources if the journalist works for a prestigious outlet
 - Favors high-profile, mainstream news media
- Sources are themselves more likely to be selected **if they are located prominently within a power structure**

Hierarchy of Sources



Source

Congruence and Availability

- Journalists (like most humans) have a tendency to associate and bond with people who are similar to them
 - Thus, more likely to interview people who share their characteristics
 - There is less and less-clear about how this phenomenon impacts sources' responses to journalists
- Journalists will often turn to sources who respond often and quickly
 - This favors wealthy and establishment sources, who can afford to manage media relationships

Key Takeaways

- News sources refer to people, organizations, documents, or objects that provide information to journalists
- News sourcing involves exchanges of power, with both journalists and sources having something at stake
- Journalists are more likely to interview sources who share important visible characteristics with them and are more readily accessible