



Example of analysis: a press article

Press Gazette • 25 June 2024 • Julian Assange freed

Article: "Campaigners claim victory as Julian Assange freed after five years in Belmarsh", Dominic Ponsford, *Press Gazette*, 25 June 2024. [Read the full article ↗](#)

The article is protected by copyright, so it is summarised paragraph by paragraph below. Read the original alongside this analysis.

facts, figures, dates, places

linking words / two sides

opinion, judgement

context, background

Headline + standfirst

The headline says that **campaigners claim victory** as Julian Assange is **freed after five years in Belmarsh** prison. The standfirst repeats the idea of a **victory** for a **long campaign**.

"Claim victory" = the article adopts the point of view of the campaigners → slightly sympathetic angle

"five years" = key figure in the headline

§1 - Lead (inverted pyramid)

The most important facts come first: Assange **has been freed and has left the UK** after a **plea deal** with US authorities. He will plead guilty to **one charge under the Espionage Act**, linked to **hundreds of thousands** of leaked documents on the **Afghanistan and Iraq wars**.

Who? What? Where? → answered in the first paragraph

Link with the WikiLeaks worksheet: US military cables from Afghanistan and Iraq

§2-3 - Who speaks: his wife

Stella Assange describes the outcome as a **"breakthrough"** and links it to **press freedom**. The journalist then gives practical facts: sentencing in the **Northern Mariana Islands**, a US territory, then a return to **Australia**.

A quote = an opinion, not the journalist's

Facts: places and itinerary

§4-6 - WikiLeaks' version

WikiLeaks says he was released on bail after **1,901 days** in prison and boarded a plane at **Stansted on 24 June**. It thanks a **global campaign**, from grassroots activists to the **United Nations**.

Very precise figure → credibility

The source of this information is WikiLeaks itself: is it neutral?

§7-8 - The official voice

The Australian Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese, tells parliament that whatever people think of Assange, the case has dragged on for too long.

"Whatever people think" = two sides: he acknowledges that opinions are divided

Political point of view

§9-10 - "Paid dearly"

WikiLeaks describes his conditions: a 2 × 3 metre cell, isolated 23 hours a day, children who have only seen him behind bars. It says he paid severely for publishing stories on government corruption and human rights abuses.

Emotional vocabulary = the most subjective part, but attributed to WikiLeaks

Link with ICIJ: truth vs corruption

§11-12 - Family and journalists' union

His mother praises "quiet diplomacy"; the journalists' union (NUJ) calls the deal a hopeful beacon and denounces the persecution of journalists.

Many voices on the same side

Theme: press freedom, counter-power

§13-15 - Background

The journalist gives the context: Assange lived in the Ecuadorian Embassy from 2012; in 2021 a judge blocked his extradition, but the US won an appeal. The US accused him of conspiring with Chelsea Manning.

"But" = opposition, the legal battle went both ways

Background comes at the end = inverted pyramid

§16 - Conclusion: a warning

The article ends with a 2020 column by journalist Peter Osborne: criminalising the protection of sources would discourage whistleblowers. He recalls that the leaks revealed a 2007 helicopter attack (made public in 2010) that killed 15 people, including a Reuters photographer.

Ending on this quote = the article's implicit message: protecting sources protects journalism

Link with SecureDrop and Snowden

The completed analysis sheet

Same sections and boxes as the blank sheet (Unit1_Fiche_Analyse_Article).

1 Identify the document

Headline / title	"Campaigners claim victory as Julian Assange freed after five years in Belmarsh"
Standfirst / byline	Standfirst: "Campaigners claim victory in long campaign for Wikileaks founder." · Byline: Dominic Ponsford, editor-in-chief of <i>Press Gazette</i>
Source	<i>Press Gazette</i> , a British news website specialising in journalism and the media industry
Date and context	25 June 2024 – the day after Assange left the UK; he was about to plead guilty before a US judge in the Northern Mariana Islands, after a legal battle that started in 2010
Nature	☒ news / information article · ☐ opinion piece · ☐ feature / in-depth article · ☐ interview · ☐ review <i>Section "News"; but many quotes give it a committed angle</i>
Category / section	☐ politics · ☐ society · ☒ media · ☐ technology · ☒ world news · ☐ culture · ☐ economy – tags: Julian Assange, Wikileaks
Visual elements and what they show	☒ photo · ☐ caption · ☐ map · ☐ chart / graph · ☒ video / social media posts A photo of Assange in 2020 outside court, a WikiLeaks video of him boarding a private jet at Stansted, and embedded posts from WikiLeaks and Stella Assange on X → they make the release concrete and emotional, and show that much of the information comes from Assange's side

2 Understand the article

Main idea in one sentence	After more than five years in a British prison, WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange has been freed thanks to a plea deal with the US, which his supporters present as a victory for press freedom.
§1	The facts: release, plea deal, one Espionage Act charge linked to leaks on Afghanistan and Iraq
§2	His wife calls it a breakthrough for press freedom; the next steps: sentencing in the Mariana Islands, return to Australia
§3	WikiLeaks' statement: 1,901 days in Belmarsh, departure from Stansted, thanks to a global campaign
§4	The Australian PM: the case has dragged on too long, Australia wants him home
§5	WikiLeaks on the price he paid: a tiny cell, isolation, separation from his children

§6	Reactions of his mother and of the journalists' union (NUJ)
§7	Background: embassy (2012), extradition blocked then allowed (2021); conclusion with Peter Osborne's warning on source protection
Structure	☒ inverted pyramid · ☐ argument building up to a conclusion · ☐ chronological · ☐ problem → solution – the most important facts first, reactions next, background at the end

3 Facts and voices

Figures	five years · 1,901 days · one charge · hundreds of thousands of documents · a 2 × 3 m cell · 23 hours a day · 15 people killed
Dates	24 June 2024 (departure) · 2012 (embassy) · 2021 (court rulings) · 2022 (Albanese in office) · 2007 (helicopter attack, revealed by the leaks in 2010)
Places	Belmarsh prison · London Stansted · Bangkok · Northern Mariana Islands · Australia · the Ecuadorian Embassy in London
People / organisations	Julian Assange · WikiLeaks · US Justice Department · Chelsea Manning · the UN · NUJ · PA news agency · Reuters
Who speaks? – role – what – for / against	Stella Assange (wife): a breakthrough for press freedom – <i>for</i> WikiLeaks (his organisation): he paid severely for the people's right to know – <i>for</i> Anthony Albanese (Australian PM): the case has dragged on too long – <i>for his return, neutral on his actions</i> Christine Assange (mother): grateful for quiet diplomacy – <i>for</i> Michelle Stanistreet (NUJ leader): a hopeful beacon, persecution of journalists – <i>for</i> Peter Osborne (journalist, 2020): criminalising source protection deters whistleblowers – <i>for</i>
Whose point of view is missing?	The US government and Assange's critics: no US official is quoted; the charges are only reported through court papers.
Linking words – opposition	while (the judge ruled for him on one point while ruling against him on all others) · regardless of (the views people have)
Linking words – cause / consequence	after (freed after a plea deal) · it followed (the charge followed the leaks) · so (so I am grateful)
Linking words – time / addition	once · when · before · later that year · but also (Albanese speaks as an MP but also as prime minister)

4 Arguments and evidence

Evidence given	☒ figures / statistics · ☒ quotes from experts · ☒ testimonies · ☒ historical facts · ☐ studies / reports · ☒ examples Precise figures on his detention, many quotes from relatives and supporters, the legal history, and the example of the helicopter attack revealed by the leaks
The journalist's conclusion	The article ends on Peter Osborne's warning: punishing those who protect sources would stop whistleblowers from coming forward, and the leaks had revealed a crime that went unpunished → the leaks were of great public importance.

5 Read between the lines

Words revealing a point of view	"claim victory", "paid dearly" (subheading), "paid severely", "hopeful beacon", "hard-fought campaign", "persecution", "this grotesque crime", "lengthy legal battle"
Tone	☐ neutral · ☐ critical · ☒ sympathetic · ☐ enthusiastic · ☐ ironic · ☐ alarming · ☐ indignant – factual on the surface, but sympathetic to Assange
Opinion expressed, justified	The journalist does not give a personal opinion, but the choice of quotes and the ending suggest that Assange's release is good news for press freedom: almost every voice is a supporter, and the final quote condemns the crime that the leaks exposed.
Are both sides given a voice?	☐ yes · ☐ partly · ☒ no – only Albanese acknowledges that opinions on Assange differ ("regardless of the views that people have")
Inconsistencies / contradictions	The headline speaks of victory, yet Assange is pleading guilty to a crime: the deal frees him but does not clear him. This reveals the article's angle: it presents the outcome from the campaigners' point of view.

6 My opinion and links

Why is it important?	It shows the personal price paid by those who publish state secrets, and it raises a key issue for democracy: can journalists be prosecuted for publishing classified information?
Links with the unit – similarities	The WikiLeaks worksheet (US military cables from Afghanistan and Iraq) · <i>The Post</i> (state secrets, threat of prison) · Snowden and SecureDrop (protection of sources) · ICIJ and GIJN (holding the powerful to account)

**Links with the unit -
differences**

Unlike the *Washington Post* in 1971, which won at the Supreme Court, Assange was prosecuted personally and had to plead guilty; unlike Woodward and Bernstein, he is a publisher of leaks rather than a traditional reporter.

New words

a plea deal • to plead guilty • bail • extradition • incarceration • a breakthrough
• a beacon • grassroots • to disseminate