

WRITING FOR NEWSPAPERS

▣ Introduction:

Writing for newspaper is quite tough and difficult job as compared to other medium like radio and television, as this medium needs excellent writing and research skills this medium not only provide information to the masses but also provide research supplement to other medium. While writing for this vital medium following points to be noted.

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- ▣ HUMAN ANGLES:
- ▣ More and more news stories concentrate on people. Newspapers especially have been repeatedly blamed of dumbing down, filling more of their columns with stories about celebrities. The advantage for the reporter is that using someone's name helps to focus the mind on what the news is about.

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- ▣ **NEWS IN BRIEF:**
- ▣ Reporters across all disciplines should be aware that intros need to be short and to the point. Rules are there to be broken, but a maximum of 20 words for the first paragraph of your story is as good a guideline as any.

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- ▣ **KEEP IT SIMPLE:**
- ▣ We've seen how it's important to cut out some unnecessary information from intros, but there's more! Don't bore the reader by starting your intro with long titles or hit them with abbreviations they won't understand.

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- ▣ EXPERIMENT:
- ▣ One of the best ways to improve your intros is to read newspapers. Adapt their style and experiment. Otherwise, when writing intros, imagine that you are telling your friends the news.

▣ STORY CONSTRUCTION:

- ▣ Historically, the inverted pyramid is the way of constructing news stories. In a nutshell, that means putting the most important stuff at the top and proceeding in an orderly fashion until you get to the bits that could be cut out if necessary. And that's a good rule for stories that you *can't* write chronologically. Rely on your news values to decide which are the best bits and those that could go by the wayside.

- ▣ **ANSWER ALL THE QUESTIONS:**
- ▣ While writing your news story on any topic or event just keep the formula of 5Ws and 1H in your mind.
- ▣ Who
- ▣ What
- ▣ When
- ▣ Where
- ▣ Why
- ▣ And How

▣ **REMEMBER YOUR AUDIENCE:**

- ▣ You are not writing to impress your friends or family. Keep in mind that you are writing for your readers so use simple words and avoid jargons.

▣ PUNCTUATION:

- ▣ It is hard to make rules about commas, because there will always be exceptions. But one rule that can usually be followed is: if a dependent clause or phrase in the middle of a sentence has a comma in front of it, it should have one after it too. And vice-versa: if there is a comma after it, there should be one before it. (Bagnall, 1994: 150)

- ▣ **NAMES:**

- ▣ Names are a basic building block of news reporting. Get them right, every time. The reporter's most basic tool beyond his or her pen is the voice. If you don't know something, especially how to spell a name or where something is, then ask. Nobody will mind. It's frustrating to appear in the local paper and to find your name spelt wrongly.

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- ▣ **FACTS**
- ▣ Get the facts right. Sometimes this can mean getting the simplest things right, for example, copying figures out of a council report. Just because it is simple does not mean that it's always done correctly. Indeed, because it seems so straightforward, many reporters do not bother checking what they have done until the fact in question has appeared wrong in the paper. Again this makes the story lose credibility and can potentially be very expensive. Having established that the information you have is a fact, make sure you write it down correctly.

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- ▣ **BALANCE:**
- ▣ All good, well-written news stories should be balanced. Balance gives the story credibility, helps the reader understand what the issues connected with the story are and, importantly, can make the story a lot better. It is also vital to be able to show balance if you are being sued.

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- ▣ **INACCURACIES:**
- ▣ In news reporting, credibility is everything and it is easy to lose and difficult to get back. Inaccuracies will lose your credibility and readers, faster than anything else.

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- ▣ GIVE THE CONTEXT:
- ▣ Set the story in its background in every sense – historically, geographically and, if necessary, how unusual it is.

REFERENCES

- ▣ Carole Fleming, Emma Hemmingway, Gillian Moore and Dave, Welford 2006 SAGE Publications Ltd.
- ▣ Bagnall, N. (1994) *Newspaper Language, Oxford: Focal Press.*
- ▣ Galtung, J. and Ruge, M. (1981) 'Structuring and Selecting the News' in S. Cohen and J. Young.



That's all
Thank
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