

Student handout 9.3

Tips for writing a good news story

Before you start to write

Think about the purpose of your story: for a news story it will most likely be to inform the audience.

Do some research and conduct interviews, remembering to take notes and write down useful quotes.

As you write

Use active verbs to show what's really happening.

Tell the really interesting information first.

Follow the outline below.

First paragraph

Try to hook the reader by beginning with a funny, clever, or surprising statement. Go for variety – try to begin your article with a question or a provocative statement. In your first one or two sentences, address the issues of who, what, when, where, and why.

Second/third/fourth paragraphs

Give the reader the details by expanding on the five Ws:

- Who was involved?
- What happened?
- Where did it happen?
- When did it happen?
- Why did it happen?

Include one or two quotes from people you interviewed. Write in the third person (he, she, it or they). Remember to stay objective, and never openly state your own opinion. Use quotes to express others' opinions.

Last paragraph

Wrap it up, and don't leave the reader hanging. Try ending with a quote, or a catchy phrase, or a neat summing-up.

(abridged)

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