WRITING A NEWS ARTICLE

Academic Writing – Structure and Organization

In this document we break down the parts of a news article into a simple framework for journalism students to follow.

CHARACTERISTICS

- IMPARTIAL
- RELEVANT
- NEW
- REAL
- USE OF SEVERAL SOURCES
- DATA, PERCENTAGES AND NUMBERS

IMPARTIAL

- The information gathered must show both sides of the story and not be biased.

RELEVANT

- The information must be important for a specific population. (Ex: USA, Bogota, children, teachers, students, teenagers, economists, lawyers, doctors, etc) or more than one.

NEW

- The information has to have happened recently.
- It can also be an important update on an “old” news. -An update which makes the news new for the public-. (Ex: Colombian government and the FARC will sign a peace deal next week. <NEW>
Ex2: Colombian government and the FARC have postponed indefinitely signing the peace deal. <AN UPDATE ON AN OLD NEWS>.

REAL

- The information cannot be fiction.
RESEARCH
☞ Must include a **MINIMUM OF THREE RELIABLE SOURCES** (the more the better as this will also avoid the story being biased).

STATISTICS
☞ A good way to show there is research behind the news is by sharing **quantitative data** with the readers.
This can be obtained from **sources** as well as from **polls** and **interviews**

STRUCTURE
☞ **HEADLINE**
☞ **BILLBOARD OR SUBTITLE**
☞ **LEAD**
☞ **BODY**
☞ **CONCLUSION**

HEADLINE
☞ The name given to a news article is called a **HEADLINE not a TITLE**.
☞ The headline is usually the **last step** when writing a news article.
☞ The simpler and shorter, the better.
☞ It comes from a catchy **WORD** (ex: Brexit), **QUOTE** (“Zapatero tus Zapatos”), **IDIOM** (ex: The Government is crying over spilled milk), **QUESTION** (ex: Will Trump survive the presidency of the USA?) or a **CATCHY SENTENCE** used in the body of the news article.

BILLBOARD OR SUBTITLE
☞ Is a short **summary** of the article including the most important facts.
☞ This short summary **cannot be used again** in the body of the news article.

LEAD
☞ Is the **introduction** of the text.
☞ Usually presented in **present perfect tense**- subject + have or has + verb in past participle+ (EX: The meetings have been taking place in La Habana; The president has sent a new proposal, etc).
☞ Gives a general overview of the news, briefly answering the questions **WHAT, WHO, WHERE AND WHEN**.
☞ A good news article answers these four questions in the first one or two paragraphs **MAXIMUM**.

BODY
☞ Expands on **WHAT, WHO, WHERE AND WHEN**.
Answers **HOW and WHY** (from most important to least important).

- Includes **DETAILS** and **STATISTICS** (quantitative data, interviews, polls, etc.).

CONCLUSION

- Is the **wrap up** -short summary-.
- It should **not have the author’s opinion**. If it does it should be very **subtle**. (Ex: Is this the country we want our children to grow in?)