



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?)