

## How to Write a News Story

No-one expects you to be an award-winning reporter so don't be intimidated by writing your own news. You will not be judged on how well you write the article but on how much useful information you've provided. We can tweak or re-write your story as long as you've given us enough material to work with. Here's the most important thing you need to know:

### The Five "W"s and the "H"

#### Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?

Any good news story provides answers to each of these questions. For example, if you wish to cover a story about a local sports team entering a competition you will need to answer these questions:

**Who** is the team? Who is the coach? Who are the prominent players? Who are the supporters?

**What** sport do they play? What is the competition?

**Where** is the competition? Where is the team normally based?

**When** is the competition? How long have they been preparing? Are there any other important time factors?

**Why** are they entering this particular competition? If it's relevant, why does the team exist at all?

**How** are they going to enter the competition? Do they need to fundraise? How much training and preparation is required? What will they need to do to win?

If you can provide all the above answers you stand a good chance of being published. To increase your chances, here's the next most important thing:

### The Inverted Pyramid

This refers to the style of journalism which places the most important facts at the beginning and works "down" from there. Ideally, the first paragraph should contain enough information to give the reader a good overview of the entire story. The rest of the article explains and expands on the beginning.

A good approach is to assume that the story might be cut off at any point due to space limitations. Does the story work if we only include the first two paragraphs? If not, re-arrange it so that it does.

### More Tips

#### It's About People

News stories are all about how people are affected. In your sports story, you might spend some time focusing on one or more individuals, or on how the team morale is doing, or how the supporters are feeling.

#### Have an Angle

Most stories can be presented using a particular angle or "slant". This is a standard

technique and isn't necessarily bad - it can help make the purpose of the story clear and give it focus. Examples of angles you could use for your sports story:

"Team Tackles National Competition"

"Big Ask for First-Year Coach"

"Local Team in Need of Funds"

**Keep it Objective**

You are completely impartial. If there is more than one side to the story, cover them all. Don't use "I" and "me" unless you are quoting someone. Speaking of quoting...

**Quote People**

For example: "We're really excited about this competition," says coach Bob Doblino, "It's the highest target we've ever set ourselves".

**Don't Get Flowery**

Keep your sentences and paragraphs short. Don't use lots of heavily descriptive language. When you've finished, go through the entire story and try to remove any words which aren't completely necessary.