

WRITING THE NEWS STORY

Who?, What?, When?, Where?,
Why?, How?

INVERTED PYRAMID

The organization of a news story in which information is arranged in descending order of Importance.

ELEMENTS OF NEWS

1. Immediacy or timeliness
2. Proximity or nearness
3. Consequence or impact
4. Prominence
5. Drama
6. Oddity or unusualness
7. Conflict
8. Sex
9. Emotions and instincts
10. progress

Inverted Pyramid Cont.

- Start with news summary lead
- Most important facts in opening, 1st and sometimes 2nd paragraph
- Remainder of paragraphs expand the lead by supporting it, explaining it or making it specific.
- Often some of 5 W's and H are put into 2nd paragraph to keep 1st paragraph short as possible.

NEWS STORY DO'S

- Interview as many people as possible.
- For controversial issues, interview and reference someone on both sides.
- Include titles for people referenced.
- Transition between paragraphs.
- Paragraphs are short, with usually one main fact or one person's opinions or explanations.
- Vary # of sentences in paragraphs to avoid monotony.(1-3 sentences)
- Give a quote its own paragraph

NEWS STORY DON'TS

- Don't use your opinion
- Don't use unnecessary words
- Don't use a thesaurus to sound smart
- Don't assume anything...check sources

CITING SOURCES

- You must attribute opinions to someone specific.
- Attributed Quotes (direct or indirect) keep you from editorializing.
- Unless someone says it, don't use even seemingly harmless adjectives like "beautiful" to describe prom decorations!
- Not every fact needs to be attributed if facts from same source and attributed near beginning of story.

Citing Sources cont.

- The preferred verb for the attribution of all direct and indirect quotes is *said*.
- Include job title, rank, etc. when first introducing quoted person.
- Quote opinions and facts directly if info is unusual, colorful, and especially controversial.
- Not sure...ask: “What would this direct quote contribute to my story?”

Citing sources cont.

- “Look at how to credit quotes,” said first-year journalism teacher Adam Korman.
- “Look at how to credit quotes,” first-year journalism teacher Adam Korman said.
- “Look at how to credit quotes,” first-year journalism teacher Adam Korman said in a written statement.
- “Look at how to credit quotes,” first-year journalism teacher Adam Korman responded.