# Tips for writing a news article

**Most of us are familiar with the way news articles are written to both present news and be engaging. Writing a news article is different from writing other articles or informative pieces because news articles present information in a specific way, following a specific structure. There are a range of tips and tools used by journalists to write news stories:**

## Structure

**The Headline**

News articles always start with a short, punchy, attention-grabbing headline. Headlines often use:

- Alliteration (using the same letter or sound at the beginning of adjacent or closely connected words). For example, "Fed up with festive food waste" or "Harry's health sees him hurry for home".
- Abbreviations. For example, "Deficit expected to deepen in MYEFO report".
- Casual language/slang. For example, "'Intimidating': 100 brawling youths terrorise at Maccas".

Headlines are typically short, partly to keep them punchy and partly because of a shortage of space.

**The Leading Paragraph (lead)**

The first paragraph of a news article is called the lead. The lead is usually less than 25 words and gives an overview of the event or story. The lead will often explain WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, and WHY. This is because when many people read newspapers, they often only read the first few paragraphs of a story, so journalists try to present all the important information first.

- Who - who was involved?
- What - what happened?
- Where - where did it happen?
- Why - why did it happen?
- When - when did it happen?
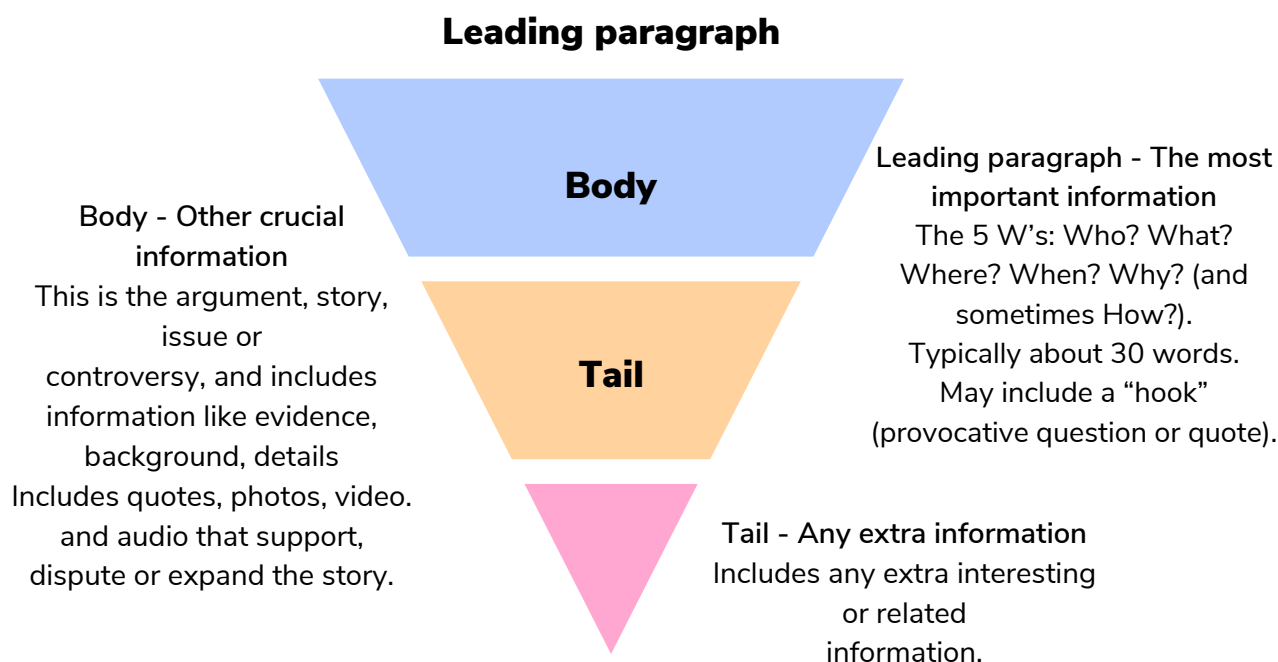- How - how did it happen?

**The Body**

After the leading paragraph, the rest of the article should be written from most to least important information. You can organise your information according to the inverted pyramid (see below). After you've listed all the most important facts in your news article, include any additional information that might help the reader learn more, such as contact information, additional facts about the topic or people involved, or quotes from interviews. When writing a quote in a newspaper article, always put the attribution – the 'he said' bit – after the quote.

**The Tail**

Conclude your article by giving it a good concluding sentence. This is often a restatement of the leading statement or a statement discussing potential future developments relating to the story. Where appropriate, you can direct readers to places where they can find out more information or can get help. You can include web addresses or phone numbers.

# The Inverted Pyramid Model of Journalistic Writing

**Leading paragraph**

**Body** - Other crucial information
This is the argument, story, issue or controversy, and includes information like evidence, background, details
Includes quotes, photos, video. and audio that support, dispute or expand the story.

**Body**

**Tail**

Leading paragraph - The most important information
The 5 W's: Who? What? Where? When? Why? (and sometimes How?).
Typically about 30 words.
May include a "hook" (provocative question or quote).

Tail - Any extra information
Includes any extra interesting or related information.

# Writing your article

**Newspaper articles are written in clear, direct language.** Avoid long sentences or confusing grammar. You should also try to:

- Avoid using too many conjunctive sentences (sentences tied together with "and"). Instead, break any long sentences into two or three sentences.
- Avoid starting sentences with But or And.
- Anytime you write a sentence starting with But or And, take those words out and see if your sentence just as well without them. If not, try reworking the sentence.
- Avoid starting a sentence with "There are," "There is," "There was," or "There were."

**Paragraphs should usually be kept short and to the point.** Big blocks of text will turn off your reader.

**Think about your audience.** In order to write a great news article you need to know exactly who you are writing for. Your audience will dictate the voice and tone of your article and help you to know what you should include.

H**ow to make your article great.** A good news article will outline facts and information. A great news article will allow readers to engage on an emotional level.