

## Writing the Feature Story — Step by Step

Use the following as a check list for writing your feature story. Remember to focus on the fun, unique, and extraordinary qualities of the story. Focus on the human angle...tap into the emotions.

### Step ONE: Choose one of the different types of feature stories:

- \* personality profile
- \* human interest
- \* trend story
- \* backgrounders (behind the scenes)
- how to
- personal experience
- in-depth story (informative feature)

### Step TWO: Write the feature

- Lead: Needs to grab the reader and set the scene.
  - See your handout of leads: Direct statement, quote, startling fact, description, story, problem/conflict, etc. Pick one to LURE your reader in. Startling statement, descriptive, etc. Must be SPECIFIC TO THE PERSON, EVENT, OR SITUATION. Keep it one to two paragraphs long.
  - Make the lead and the rest of your feature like snapshot images. What do you see? Hear? Smell? Feel? Experience?
  - Involve the readers and their emotions by making them feel a part of the experience with the power of your words.
- Purpose statement: This comes at the end of your lead. It includes your topic + your angle (this states the purpose of your feature).
  - Angles should be unique and interesting to grab the readers' attention.
  - Ask yourself, "Are you giving your readers NEW information, something that will intrigue them to read further." Or is it the same ole stuff? Don't cheat your reader. This is a newspaper. Tell them something NEW.
- Nut Graph: This is a short paragraph that gives the main idea of the story, in case the lead did not quite explain it.
  - Sometimes the nut graph is used to provide the background knowledge your readers need to understand what you are writing about.
  - Keep it short, including as many of the 5 Ws and 1 H as needed.
- Body: Should utilize the quote transition formula.
  - As we discussed earlier this semester. Use highly informative quotes from your sources. Features use LOTS OF QUOTES
  - Use a variety of relevant sources. Example: If the feature is on a specific person, interview their family, friends, etc.
  - Get quotes from the 3 MAJOR SOURCES:
    - \* An expert
      - Someone directly involved
      - An unbiased, objective observer, with relevant information
  - Transitions are your way of...
    - Explaining or interpreting the quotes
    - Offering additional facts and information
    - Linking one idea to another idea to show how they relate to each other
  - Types of paragraph styles to use in body development. The more the merrier.
    - Examples
    - Stories
    - Quotes
    - Comparisons
    - Contrasts
    - Historical background
    - Causes/effects
    - Description
    - Statistics
- Conclusion: Always completely tell the story—have depth. Story should end with a strong quote that draws the story to a satisfying conclusion. In addition to using any introductory device as a concluding device, you can also allow a primary source quotation to bring the feature to closure.)
  - After reading the story, what do you think makes this article a feature?
    - \* Longer shelf life. More timeless
    - \* Human Interest
    - \* Novelty
    - \* Longer than a news story
    - \* More quotes
    - \* "Tease me you devil . . ."
    - \* Tell me what you are talking about
    - \* Oh yeah, prove it!
    - \* Give me something memorable
    - Uses sidebars to arouse interest