

Let's talk about ...

News Writing

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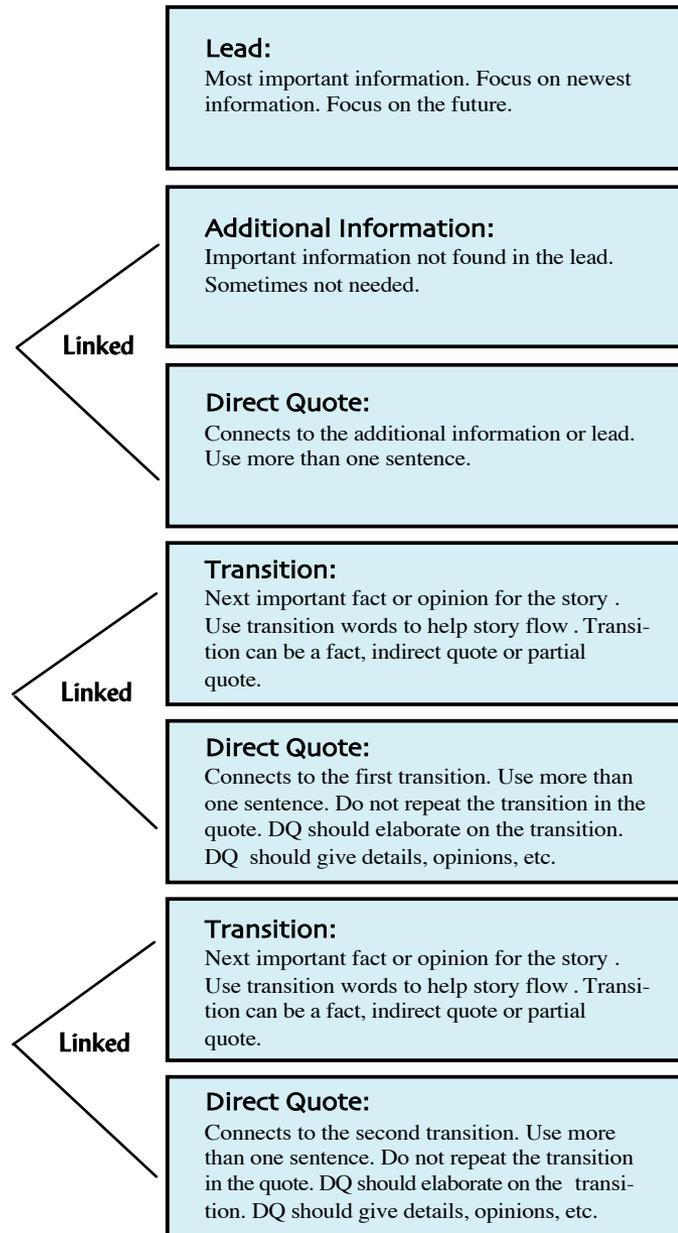
News Writing ...

gives the reader information that will have an impact on them in some way. It usually flows from most important to least important.

“What is news? It is information only.”

- *Walter Cronkite, former CBS News anchor*

Transition/Quote Formula



Side Notes:
1) Each box is a new a paragraph.
2) Story should flow from most important to least important information.

and so on... until the story is complete

**Let's start at
the beginning
with ... LEADS.**

Let's talk about

Leads



Lead:

Most important information. Focus on newest information. Focus on the future.

Question to ask yourself:

What do my readers need to know most???

Leads

Most leads for the News Writing Contest should be summary leads. That means they summarize the 5 Ws and H of the story, starting off with the most important W or H.

Types of News Leads:

Rarely use these...

“Who lead” - begins with a person. The person is usually not the most important fact of the story.

“When lead” - begins with time. Rarely is the time the most important factor.

“Where lead” - begins with the place. Hardly ever is where the most important factor.

Types of News Leads:

Use these often...

“How lead” - begins with the how of the story.
Used often.

“Why lead” - begins with the cause the story.
Used often.

“What lead” - begins with the fact of the story.
Used often.

Who lead

Definitely NO!

Principal Joe Blow announced Tuesday that students will no longer be allowed to wear flip flops to school.

Maybe... probably yes.

Actor Chris Hemsworth, who plays Thor, will speak at the high school Thursday after giving a speech at the County Expo Center.



When lead

Definitely no!

On Tuesday, Principal Joe Blow announced that students will no longer be able to wear flip flops to school.

Still a no ...

On Thursday, actor Chris Hemsworth will speak to the senior class about how students can become “real-life” heroes through community service.



Question:

How often do we use this type of lead?

Where lead

Definitely no!

At the school board meeting on Tuesday, Principal Joe Blow announced that he has ended the reign of flip flops on campus.

Yes. Because it's specific and relevant.

In the principal's office, the senior dumped 30 pounds of sand to protest the cancellation of the class senior trip to Cancun.



How lead

Armed with spray paint cans and measuring tapes, the seniors decorated their parking spots for the 2017-18 school year.

Why lead

Because of rain delays and advancing to the playoffs, the softball team will not finish its season before the last day of school.

What lead

School will start and end two hours later next year if the school board approves the superintendent's latest proposal.

Now that we know the type of lead we are looking for, how do we write a good lead?

- read the entire prompt
- find the newest information in the prompt
- beware of older, more controversial news
- write one to two sentences summarizing the “new” news including as many other Ws and H as possible
- write in third person, concise and to the point — just the facts, ma’am
- leave out the word ‘Leaguetown’ unless necessary for understanding

News Writing

Invitational A Meet • 2017



You are a reporter for the Leaguetown **Press**, the student newspaper of Leaguetown High School. From the given information, write a **news story** as you would for the high school newspaper. You may use statements attributed to individuals as **direct or indirect quotes**. You may not change the meaning of a statement. You have **45 minutes**. Do not write your name or the name of your school on this sheet or your entry. **Put your number on your paper.**

Leaguetown High School, located in West Texas, has 1,200 students enrolled in grades 9-12. For the past three years, the Student Council has sold Valentine's Day grams and roses as a fundraiser. Students could purchase a personalized gram for \$1 and/or a rose for \$3 the week before Valentine's Day. Then on Valentine's Day, the Student Council delivered the messages and flowers to students. Last year the council raised \$2,000. Yesterday, Principal Matt Trough announced that he was cancelling the fundraiser this year due to inappropriate messages being sent last year.

Last year the Student Council used the money from the fundraiser to host a spring dance for students. The funds paid for a DJ and refreshments. The Student Council planned to do the same event this year on Friday, March 3.

The Student Council is going to meet on Wednesday, Feb. 8, to decide if it will do a different fundraiser or cancel the dance.

You are writing for the issue of the *Press* to be distributed Tuesday, Feb. 7.

■ MATT TROUGH, principal

"I apologize for the late notice, but I wasn't made aware of the problems until last week. Two parents met with me and told me their daughters received Valentine grams with explicit messages on them. The parents said both girls did not have boyfriends and had no idea who sent the messages. I saw both grams, and they were extremely inappropriate messages.

"Several teachers also talked to me about the fundraiser. They said many of their students felt left out when they didn't receive a rose or gram during class. I want our school to be inclusive and not exclusive. While I don't believe the Student Council meant any harm with the fundraiser, we are seeing harm. It's my job to protect the students, and the easiest way to do this is to cancel the fundraiser.

"I am happy to approve another fundraiser before March 3, so the council can raise money for the dance. Several years ago the group sold school bumper stickers and did quite well. That might be a good idea to bring back."

■ JOSIE TILLMAN, senior and Student Council president

"Mr. Trough's cancellation took us by complete surprise. We had no idea about the inappropriate messages last year. We don't read the grams before we deliver them. We don't want to be nosy. None of us want students to get hurt through our fundraiser. We understand why Mr. Trough cancelled the grams, but I don't get why we can't sell the roses. We make the most money off the roses. The officers met with him yesterday after school, and he's not budging on his decision.

"Honestly, I don't know if we have enough time to organize another

fundraiser before the March 3 dance. The easiest thing might be to cancel the dance. Maybe we could do an end-of-school dance in May?”

■ **HUMA MIRA, English teacher**

“The Student Council members had their hearts in the right place with this fundraiser, but it had unintentional consequences. I hated seeing the looks on my students’ faces when they didn’t get a gram or flower on delivery day. Last year almost every student in my class received something, except for two shy girls. They tried to put on brave faces when everyone was gushing about their grams and flowers, but I could see that they were crushed and so embarrassed. Mr. Trough made the right decision in cancelling the fundraiser. Students will be upset if the dance is cancelled, but maybe the Student Council can find another fundraiser and host another event later in the school year.”

■ **TREVOR RINCON, junior**

“Mr. Trough should not have cancelled the fundraiser so late in the game. If some students were writing inappropriate messages on the grams, he should read them all before they are delivered. That would solve the problem. I don’t usually send grams or flowers, but I was planning on going to the dance in March. It was a blast last year.”

■ **SELA FRY, sophomore**

“I didn’t get any flowers or Valentine grams last year. It was a little awkward when the girl sitting next to me in class got four flowers and three messages. She was a cheerleader and had a boyfriend. There were a few of us who didn’t get anything, so I wasn’t alone. I am kind of relieved that Mr. Trough cancelled the fundraiser, though. It is a little stressful wondering if you are going to get anything. I feel bad about the dance, but maybe the Student Council could have the dance without a DJ!”

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

The Student Council sponsor Martha Ray said she had not ordered the flowers yet. The Student Council will not lose any money on the cancelled fundraiser.

What lead

The fate of the spring dance is up in the air because Principal Matt Trough cancelled the Valentine's Day fundraiser. The Student Council will meet Wednesday to discuss the issue.

Why lead

Because the Student Council cannot sell Valentine's Day grams and roses this year, the fate of the spring dance is up in the air. Principal Matt Trough cancelled the fundraiser due to inappropriate messages sent on the grams last year.

The Student Council will meet Wednesday to discuss the issue.

Let's talk about

Direct Quotes



Direct Quotes:

- Should be linked to the paragraph before them. The quote should elaborate on the previous paragraph.

For example:

Trough became aware of the explicit messages just last week.

“Two parents met with me and told me their daughters received Valentine grams with explicit messages on them,” Trough said. “The parents said both girls did not have boyfriends and had no idea who sent the messages.”

Next transition

Last year, the Student Council used the funds raised to host a spring dance and had the same plan for this year. The Student Council now must decide whether to cancel the dance or find another fundraiser. The group meets Wednesday to decide.

What comes next? From whom?

Direct quote – elaborates on previous transition

“Mr. Trough’s cancellation took us by complete surprise,” Student Council President Josie Tillman said. “We had no idea about the inappropriate messages last year. We don’t read the grams before we deliver them.”

What follows this?

More transitions and quotes (linked)

For the past three years, the council sold grams for \$1 each and roses for \$3 each. Then on Valentine's Day, the group would deliver the messages and flowers to students.

“None of us want students to get hurt through our fundraiser,” Tillman, a senior, said. “We understand why Mr. Trough cancelled the grams, but I don't get why we can't sell the roses. We make the most money off the roses.”

But English teacher Huma Mira said she always felt bad when one of her students didn't receive a rose or gram.

“Last year almost every student in my class received something, except for two shy girls,” Mira said. “They tried to put on brave faces when everyone was gushing about their grams and flowers, but I could see that they were crushed and so embarrassed.”

Sophomore Sela Fry agrees that the fundraiser can be stressful for students.

“I didn't get any flowers or Valentine grams last year,” she said. “It was a little awkward when the girl sitting next to me in class got four flowers and three messages. I am kind of relieved that Mr. Trough cancelled the fundraiser.”

Direct Quotes:

- Should not repeat the transition/lead before them.

For example:

Sophomore Sela Fry agrees that the fundraiser can be stressful for students.

“The fundraiser was stressful for me last year,” she said. “I didn’t get any flowers or Valentine grams.”

Direct Quotes:

- Can be longer than one sentence.
- Should have attribution after the first sentence of the quote.
- Attribution should be: Noun then verb.

For example:

Correct - senior Bob Rodriguez said.

Incorrect - said senior Bob Rodriguez.

(unless you have an unusually long title)

- Do not place two people's direct quotes next to each other without a transition.

Let's talk about
Transitions



Transitions

- VERY, VERY IMPORTANT. Hold the story together. Link the paragraphs together.
- Can be fact, indirect quote or a partial quote.

For example - **FACT TRANSITION:**

For the past three years, the council sold grams for \$1 each and roses for \$3 each. Then on Valentine's Day, the group would deliver the messages and flowers to students.

Transitions

- Can be fact, indirect quote or a partial quote.

For example - **INDIRECT QUOTE TRANSITION:**

(IQ Transition) But English teacher Huma Mira said she always felt bad when one of her students didn't receive a rose or gram.

Transitions

➤ Can be fact, indirect quote or a partial quote.

For example - **PARTIAL QUOTE TRANSITION:**

(PQ Transition) Tillman said cancelling the fundraiser is “extreme.”

Transitions

➤ Use transitional words to help with the flow (as needed): After all, Also, Finally, In addition, However, Otherwise, Then

For example:

In addition, the Student Council will sell lemonade at the next basketball game.

Transitions

➤ Use parts of the direct quotes and information from the situation to create the transition.

For example

□ Huma Mira, English teacher

“The Student Council members had their hearts in the right place with this fundraiser, but it had unintentional consequences. I hated seeing the looks on my students’ faces when they didn’t get a gram or flower on delivery day. Last year almost every student in my class received something, except for two shy girls. They tried to put on brave faces when everyone was gushing about their grams and flowers, but I could see that they were crushed and so embarrassed. Mr. Trough made the right decision in cancelling the fundraiser. Students will be upset if the dance is cancelled, but maybe the Student Council can find another fundraiser and host another event later in the school year.”

The Transition

But English teacher Huma Mira said she always felt bad when one of her students didn’t receive a rose or gram.

Direct Quote

“Last year almost every student in my class received something, except for two shy girls,” Mira said. “They tried to put on brave faces when everyone was gushing about their grams and flowers, but I could see that they were crushed and so embarrassed.”

For example

- **From the situation:**

Leaguetown High School, located in West Texas, has 1,200 students enrolled in grades 9-12. For the past three years, the Student Council has sold Valentine's Day grams and roses as a fundraiser. Students could purchase a personalized gram for \$1 and/or a rose for \$3 the week before Valentine's Day. Then on Valentine's Day, the Student Council delivered the messages and flowers to students. Last year the council raised \$2,000. Yesterday, Principal Matt Trough announced that he was cancelling the fundraiser this year due to inappropriate messages being sent last year.

The Transition

For the past three years, the council sold grams for \$1 each and roses for \$3 each. Then on Valentine's Day, the group would deliver the messages and flowers to students.

No-nos for News Stories

- Using the word “Leaguetown”
- Starting with “The School Board ...”
- Writing a feature lead
- Adding facts
- Putting attribution before the quote
- Missing the news peg
- Missing important information and people
- Stacking quotes
- Forgetting to use student quotes
- Start your transition with “Most students” or “Some students”

Checklist for News Stories

- ✓ Are the most important and recent facts first?
- ✓ Is the story accurate? Are the sources identified fully?
- ✓ Are the paragraphs short?
- ✓ Is the sentence structure varied in the story?
- ✓ Is the story neat and double-spaced so that it is easy to read?
- ✓ Does your story flow? Did you use the transition/quote formula?
- ✓ Did you use active voice?

What will make the difference?



- Getting the news peg in the lead

What will make the difference?



- Using the T/Q formula

What will make the difference?



- Using the “correct” sources and quotes

Pitfalls to Avoid

- Editorializing - Keep your opinion out of the story
- Using first and second person - Keep yourself out of the story. Common error: “our school”
- Messy handwriting, poor grammar and spelling
- Paragraphs too long
- Misspelling names in the story
- Trying to use all of the information

What went wrong?

School is stressful for most students at Leaguetown High School. Junior Belle Williams takes six AP classes, plays varsity basketball and serves as president of the Spanish Club.

Students looking for help with stress or other issues will be able to get support for free from the new school psychologist Dr. Embler starting April 3. The new position was made possible by way of a donation from two local business people, who agreed to fund her position through the 2018-19 school year.

“Our students’ stress levels are high,” Principle Vela Espinoza said. “We have some students taking five and six Advanced Placement classes, and those same students are deeply involved in extracurricular activities. Ms. Embler will be able to help students with anxiety, stress -- really any problem they are having.”

Embler has specialized in adolescent psychology for the past 10 years in Little Rock, Arkansas, where she had her own private practice and also volunteered at a school.

“Through both my practice and the school, I have worked with hundreds of teens,” Embler said. “And Ms. Espinoza is correct in her thinking--teens are over-stressed.”

Belle said she is not “embarrassed” to schedule an appointment with Embler.

“I am one of those stressed teens Ms. Espinoza is talking about,” she said. “As it is now, I sleep about four hours a night. My mom wants me to get a job to help out, but I don’t think I can fit one more thing into my schedule.”

“I won’t have any problem scheduling an appointment either,” sophomore Dax Shepherd said.

Her office will be in the old textbook storage room next to our main office, and she will work from 7:30 am to 3:30 p.m.

English teacher Noe Gonzales said, “I look forward to being able to direct students to Ms. Embler. I have noticed that more and more of my students seem depressed each year. I am not sure what is the cause, but I would be willing to bet stress is a part of the problem.”

Many students said they hope to schedule appointments with Embler.

“It will be great,” junior Cash Rondo said.

Embler hopes to start support groups for students, in addition to the individual 45-minute appointments.

“I love the idea of being on the campus and meeting with students every day Embler said. “I am definitely looking forward to my start date.”

Contest Day

1. Read the entire prompt.
2. Review it again, looking for the newest information. Underline that information.
3. Highlight or underline the 5Ws and H.
4. Highlight or underline the most important people interviewed. Highlight or underline the most essential quotes.
5. Scratch out stupid, inane quotes.
6. Pay attention to the “Additional Information.”
7. Write your lead. How, why or what lead.

Contest Day

8. Write an additional info. paragraph if needed.
9. Use a direct quote (more than one sentence is okay).
10. Write a transition about the next most important thing.
11. Use a direct quote directly related to the transition above. If it's an indirect quote transition, use a direct quote from that same person.
12. Write another transition about the next most important thing.
13. Another direct quote.
14. Keep going.

Let's practice!

- Follow the steps from “Contest Day”
- Write as much as you can. Edit. Write. Edit.

**Did you get the
news peg?**

