

News writing

Shortcode	Description
AP: Strong	The writing here shows a strong awareness of writing conventions generally followed by news writers. Of course, writers should follow AP style in almost all cases, except in cases when the publication's stylebook dictates otherwise. This kind of writing creates consistency for the reader, putting the emphasis on the content and not variations in punctuation, abbreviations or other usage. Well done with copy editing for style here.
AP: Weak	News writers generally write with more consistency than this. The rules that govern this consistency are called "style" generally and the most universally used style is "Associated Press style." Consider how the writing could more closely follow this style, or, if not AP style, then a consistent style dictated by the publication's style guide. Regardless of the guide used, consistency is the goal, so that the reader can focus on content rather than variations and irregularities in the writing.
Editorializing	The term "editorializing" refers to the insertion of opinion into a piece of writing. Of course, we encourage the writer's opinion in many different forms of writing. However, news writing pairs facts with the opinions of others, not the writer's opinion. Editorializing can be fixed by (1) attributing an opinions to the people who said it; (2) being careful with adjectives that reveal the writer's opinion, such as "good" or "successful"; (3) avoid overstating reality with phrases like "everyone loves her"; and (4) avoiding using first and second person pronouns like "I" and "you."
Lead: Excellent	Readers of this story will NEED to keep reading because the lead is excellent at inviting the reader's curiosity. This can be difficult to do in news writing. However, it is done well here. The word choices and the news judgment displayed here will attract readers and make it more likely that they will finish the story. Congrats.
Lead: Inverted pyramid	This story showcases a well-written lead that solidly summarizes the news. An "inverted pyramid" news lead harvests the most vital facts and issues from a story and provides them to the reader immediately. Using this type of lead ensures that readers will be informed even if they don't continue reading. Well done.
Lead: Weak	If a story is to succeed, the lead of the story must be a mixture of inviting, informing and active. A lead can invite by presenting issues or conflicts that the story will work to resolve. The lead also might inform readers of the vital facts of the story right at the outset, ensuring that they understand the issue even if they quit reading immediately. Finally, a lead should strive to be energetic with its verb choices and sentence construction to attract reader attention.
Other Research: Context	While most readers of this story will attend the school or be part of the school community, the story could provide more context. Often, writers do so much research that they know the story "too well." News writers know all of the basic facts, and that can lead to missing context. However, consider what background the reader needs. What information would be useful to the reader, especially names, dates, times and locations? Providing useful information transforms a news story into a resource for readers.
Other research: Strong	While quotes make up much of journalistic research, reporters strive to find the dates, numbers and other facts that explain the topic. This story showcases not just basic factual research that the reader expects, but also unexpected facts from trustworthy sources. This kind of work takes time but is rewarded by readers who hunger for the authoritative take on a story. Nice work with factual research indeed.
Other research: Weak	If readers are to trust a story -- or indeed a publication -- they need specific, trustworthy facts from authoritative sources. Consider how this story could provide that type of research. What sources would have given expert analysis? What numbers or statistics would have helped explain? What documents, databases or reports provide vital information about this? Answering these questions would help the story here.
Quotes: Strong	This writing vividly displays the people interviewed for the story. Quotations bring to life the personality of the source, in addition to allowing those sources to voice their opinions. Gathering such quotations demands time and attention to listening while interviewing. The result? Your readers feel like they have met your sources and had interesting conversations with them. What a gift you have given them.
Quotes: Style	Aside from gathering strong quotations from interviews, writing for news demands a strong display of those quotations within the story. We can describe this clear and consistent display of interview material as "quotation style." Strong quotation style demands (1) proper use of punctuation, whether commas, quotation marks or periods; (2) consistent attribution, with "said" as the most common attribution verb; (3) logical paragraph breaks to help the reader transition into and away from the quotation. Read professional reporting to see how quotations are commonly attributed there.
Quotes: Weak	The quotations within a story have a two-fold opportunity. First, quotations provide your sources an opportunity to comment on their opinion of the story's topic. What do they think? And second, by providing quotations, the story can describe your source's personality to the reader. Of course, this demands thoughtful interviews (that often occur in person and after preliminary research). Also, beware that quotations don't relay factual information that could be communicated with indirect quotations.
Sentences: Strong	News writing depends on strong, declarative sentences that make the facts clear. Verbs must be active and vivid to make the sentences compelling. This kind of writing takes restraint. Some sentences must be short. However, others must be longer and more complicated to fully explain facts and context. This story showcases those kinds of sentence structures, much to the benefit of the reader.
Sentences: Unclear	At the most basic level, sentences should communicate a singular idea or piece of information to the reader. The failure of a sentence to do so can be the result of poor word choice, misplaced punctuation or simply not having a clear goal for the sentence's purpose. Regardless, the problem can be most quickly and effectively spotted by reading the entirety of the story out loud. Places where your reading stumbles will likely be places where the reader will stumble as well.
Sentences: Wordy	Writing concisely has always been a goal of news writers. Consider how this piece of writing could have used fewer words to communicate the same facts and message. Where are excess words usually found within a sentence? A good place to look is within the verb phrase. For instance, "The team has been considered as ranked #1" could be "The team is ranked #1." Making your writing more compact will make it possible to include more facts and quotes for your reader to enjoy.

News writing

Shortcode	Description
Structure: Lead buried	Story structure in news writing most often flounders in a predictable way: "burying the lead." What does that mean? If writers put the most vital piece of information somewhere other than the start of the story, they have buried the lead. Consider how the audience for this story might hope to learn something from your reporting earlier than you provide it to them. What do they need to know right at the start?
Structure: Strong	The story structure here anticipates what the reader wants to know and -- more importantly -- when they want to know it. This takes planning and forethought. Often this structure is the inverted pyramid structure for news stories, but not always. So, feeding information to the reader often becomes more complicated than simply ranking facts in order of importance and displaying them in that sequence. Nice work with this complicated task of structuring the story.
Structure: Transitions	News writing doesn't often demand long or complicated transition statements. Writers are often encouraged to simply move from topic to topic. However, when these switches are particularly abrupt, the reader feels off balance. Try to locate moments in the story here that could use even a slight transition to ease the switch in topic.
Topic: Strong	A topic like this is excellent for your audience. The "elements" of news writing are often abbreviated at TIPCAP. That's the combination of Timeliness, Impact, Proximity, Conflict, Unusualness and Prominence. A story as well chosen as this will feature many of these elements. Good job serving your readers.
Topic: Weak	Consider how to improve the topic of this story. Most stories can be improved by being framed in a more narrow and local way. For instance, a story about sports injuries is very vague. You could write many books about that topic; how can you expect to cover it in a single news story? However, if you wrote about how the golf team at your school was suffering a pattern of elbow injuries, that would be newsworthy. Make "narrow and local" a mantra for finding and framing news stories. Also, news writing often hinges on including "TIPCAP," or Timeliness, Impact, Proximity, Conflict, Unusual-ness and Prominence.