



Every news article, no matter how you write it, must include the five W's:

WHAT happened? What is the story you're telling?

WHO was there? Who is the story about? Who is involved in the story?

WHEN did the story happen? What day or time period are you talking about?

WHERE did the story or event occur?

WHY is this important? Why should people care?

These are questions you should get the answers to during your research and interviews. Once you have these answers, you're ready to start your article.



There are four parts to every article:

LEAD – Two sentences or less that will make the reader interested in your article

NUT GRAF – One to two paragraphs that explain what the article is about and why the story is important, as well as the angle from which you will be describing the story.

STORY BODY – The supporting quotes, contextual information and analysis that explain your story. All the elements in your story body should be able to directly support the information you provide in your nut graf.

CONCLUSION – A final paragraph or two that will tie your story together. The conclusion will connect the body of your story back to your nut graf so that the entire article works as a single complete thought.

The Four Parts of an Article

| | |
|------------|--|
| Lead | <p>Iraq (Reuters) - A bomb exploded in a crowded market in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul on Monday, killing one person and wounding 27, a police source said.</p> <p>WORLD</p> |
| Nut Graf | <p>The attack occurred a day after a raid on Iraq's central bank in Baghdad by suicide bombers and gunmen in which 15 people were killed, and as parliament was due to convene in the capital for the first time since an inconclusive March election.</p> |
| Story Body | <p>The police source said the bomb was planted in a wooden cart at a market in central Mosul, and appeared to target a police patrol. Two policemen were among the wounded.</p> <p>Mosul, 390 km (240 miles) north of Baghdad, is on the frontlines of a longstanding feud between Arabs and minority Kurds over land, power and oil wealth. The region is also a hub for Sunni Islamist insurgents linked to al Qaeda.</p> <p>Iraq is on high alert for insurgent attacks as parliament convenes for the first time since the March 7 election, which produced no clear winner.</p> |
| Conclusion | <p>Overall violence has dropped sharply since the all-out sectarian warfare of 2006-07. But casualties have risen since the vote, suggesting insurgents are trying to exploit the vacuum as political rivals vie for power.</p> |



HOW TO WRITE AN ARTICLE

LEAD: Create immediacy and make your reader interested in your story. Leads are short, interesting and can be creative.

There are several types of introductions you can use:

- **Summary:** Sum up the **who, what, when, where, why** and **how** of the
- **Anecdotes:** Tell a short compelling story that people can relate to.
- **Descriptive:** provide a description of the person you are, or of something that happened in the event you are covering.
- **Question:** If your article is investigating an issue that will be completely answered by the end of the article, you can begin with a question.
- **Pun or truism:** Play with words or think of a pun or a truism that can be applied to the core of your topic.
- **Quote:** This type of lead should to be used with caution. If during your research you came across an important quote that can pull the reader into your story, use it. Otherwise, it's better to use a different kind of lead.

- The Walter S. Johnson Foundation:

NUT GRAF: the essential theme of the story that everything else in the story is built upon.

****BY THE END OF THE NUT GRAF, THE READER SHOULD HAVE THE “WHO WHAT WHEN WHERE AND WHY” OF THE STORY****

The nut graf has several purposes:

- *It justifies the story by telling readers why they should care.*
- *It provides a transition from the lead and explains the lead and its connection to the rest of the story.*
- *It often tells readers why the story is timely.*
- *It often includes supporting material that helps readers see why the story is important.*

-The Poynter Institute

This is where you develop the story's **angle**. Every story is described from some kind of viewpoint. This viewpoint is called the **angle**.



HOW TO WRITE AN ARTICLE

STORY BODY: After the nut graf, you begin to introduce your “evidence” for your story. Tell more than one side of the story in the body. Your reporting should be balanced, with quotes and analysis from multiple viewpoints. Everything you write in the body of your story should relate to the statement you make in your nut graf.

QUOTES: The body should contain quotes from sources that build your story. Try to use the words of the people you interview to tell your story, rather than paraphrasing them in your own words.

Sources should be varied, with different expertise or backgrounds.

Always attribute, or name, your sources with first and last name and a bit of context to make them relevant.

Ex: “I heard the window break at sometime before dawn,” said Ron Smith, who lives next door to the house that was burglarized.

“We have been studying chickens for years and have never seen them behave like this,” Nancy Jones, a scientist for Institute of Chicken Studies, said.

If you must work with an anonymous source, confirm from another source that the information you receive is true.

Use descriptions of people and places between quotes to help your readers imagine your story. Keep your descriptions and context short but colorful.

CONCLUSION: Give your readers a sense of finality when they finish your article.

You can finish your article with a quote, a thought-provoking statement or a sentence or two summing up the points made in the article.

The conclusion should not repeat the nut graf any other part of the article, it should build upon your nut graf to create a greater meaning for the article.



TIPS:

MOST IMPORTANT!! Check the spelling and accuracy of all names, dates, and other important facts in your story before publishing it. Make sure that if you get a piece of information from only source that it is accurate.

Don't assume everyone knows what you are talking about. If your story requires some background information or history, provide it in the article so everyone can understand it

Try to interview at least three people for every story. Make sure their viewpoints and expertise are different from one another.

When attributing quotes, always use the word "said."

Limit your story to one sentence per paragraph.

Sources used for the creation of this tutorial

WFSJ, Basics of Feature Writing: <http://www.wfsj.org/course/en/L4/L4P09.html>

Poynter Online, The Nut Graf: <http://www.poynter.org/column.asp?id=52&aid=34457>