

Journalism Parts and Pieces: How to Structure Your Story

There's no magic formula to journalistic writing, however most stories contain the following parts:

- **Headline:** The headline grabs the reader's attention and gives her a quick overview of what's in the story. Your headline should be 5-10 words and catchy! Remember, you're trying to pique the reader's interest, giving them enough information that they want to read on.
- **Lead:** The opening paragraph(s) is called the lead. This is your chance to solidify your reader's interest in the topic. You could describe a scene, introduce a compelling character, or use an intriguing quote.
- **Nut:** The nut is the paragraph(s) that provides context for your topic. Make sure to give your reader any vital background information needed to understand the issue at hand. This may also be where you let the reader know what's at stake and why they should care about this event or issue!
- **Meat:** This is the fun part! If you're writing about an event: What was the outcome? If you're writing about an issue: How is the community or country or world responding? For both: What do other people have to say about this subject? Paraphrasing or quoting experts on the subject or people being affected is a great way to bring the story to life for your reader.
- **Close:** Time to wrap it up. The close doesn't just regurgitate what you've already said. Instead, it poses an additional question or topic for the reader to ponder.

** This resource isn't meant as an outline to follow, but as a reference for what elements you might include.*