



SPORTS JOURNALISM It's all in the structure!

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 should be catchy! Try to pique the reader's interest, giving them just enough info that they want to read more.

Example:

Olympian from the Equator Wins at a Crawl

LEDE

The opening paragraph of an article is crucial to getting your readers interested and invested in your topic. What journalists call the LEDE is your chance to captivate your reader. You could begin by describing a scene, introducing a compelling character, or citing a quote.

Example:

A novice swimmer from equatorial Africa stole the hearts of Olympic swimming fans yesterday with a glorious failure in the 100-metre freestyle heats.

NUT

The NUT is the paragraph 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 introduce what's at stake and outline why your readers should



care about this event or issue. Make sure that somewhere in the LEDE or NUT, you've covered the five "W's and the H"!

Who – who is the story about?

What – what is the story about?

Where – where did the event you're writing about occur?

When – when did it occur?

Why – why did this happen?

How – how did this happen?

Example:

Eric Moussambani, 22, only started swimming in January and his trip to Sydney was his first overseas. He trained in the shark and crocodile infested waters of Equatorial Guinea because his local pool was too full of tourists. In contrast to the futuristic outfits of most of the competitors, Moussambani stood at the start in traditional swimming trunks with the drawstring clearly showing.

BODY

This is the fun part! You've done the hard work of piquing your readers' interest; you've earned their attention and investment. Now you get to tell them what's up!

Sports Event: What were the highlights? The outcome?

Sports Issue: How has this issue developed over time? How is the sports world responding?

Event or Issue: What do other people have to say about this subject? Paraphrase or quote some of the sound bites you gathered.

Example:

With the crowd's cheers ringing in his ears, Moussambani covered the first 50 metres in a respectable 40.97 seconds. Not once did he put his head under water and his rather ragged technique soon started to tell. After a brave attempt at a tumble turn he started to struggle and poolside observers looked on anxiously as he struck for home.

Officials even considered the possibility of having to rescue him as he appeared to sink beneath the water 10 metres from home before one final effort saw him finish in a less than world-beating time of 1 minute 52.72 seconds. It may have



been a full minute too slow to qualify for the semi-finals, but the sporting Australians stood and cheered in appreciation.

Clearly moved by the reaction of the fans, Moussambani said their support had got him to the finish after he almost gave up. He said: "I want to send hugs and kisses to the crowd because it was their cheering that kept me going." When Moussambani returned to his room at the athletes' village, a sign on the door said: "Home of Eric the Swimmer."

Olympic statisticians could not say if this was the slowest swim in Olympic history but it was at least 30 seconds slower than the time it took Arnold Guttmann, of Hungary, to win the first 100 metre final at Athens in 1896, in open water around the Bay of Zea, near Piraeus.

The Equatorial Guinea Swimming Federation was formed just six months ago. The nation does not have an Olympic-sized pool - the best is a 20 metre hotel pool in the capital Malabo. Team members often practise in the crocodile and shark infested waters around the west African coast.

Paula Barilla Bolopa, 18, another of Equatorial Guinea's four-strong team, said yesterday: "It is a very basic pool. Sometimes I cannot use it because hotel guests are in it." Both Barilla Bolopa and Moussambani are in Sydney thanks to an Olympic programme which allows competitors from smaller nations to compete without reaching the set qualifying times.

CLOSE

Time to wrap it up. The CLOSE doesn't just regurgitate what you've already said. Instead, it poses an additional question about the topic or offers a fresh way of looking at the issue.

Example:

Reflecting on his performance Moussambani said he had enjoyed every minute. He said: "I'm really pleased at what happened. Gold medals are not everything at the Olympic Games. What happened to me was worth more than gold. I want to train now and come back in Athens next time."

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<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/equatorialguinea/1356144/Olympian-from-the-Equator-wins-at-a-crawl.html>