

The body of the story

Once you write a lead and hook it to the second paragraph, now it's time to write the body. (The rest of the story) If you have written a traditional inverted pyramid lead, you then have probably summarized the story in your first sentence or two. Now you must elaborate

Simply retell the story in more detail in the next few paragraphs, making sure you bring in all the background necessary to give the reader full understanding

If the story is simple with one main fact to convey, the task is not too difficult. Main fact goes in the lead paragraphs, and then the secondary details follow in subsequent paragraphs, as the pyramid narrows.

If the story is more complex i.e. if it has more than one main fact, your job is ***harder***.

You must summarize, giving all three or four main facts in the lead, if possible. In the next section of the story give the most important detail of each fact. After that, provide additional but decreasingly important information on each fact.

Organizational Patterns

Not all stories can be written in inverted-pyramid style. News writers nowadays have modified the inverted pyramid. Newspaper writing reads more and more like magazine writing or play writing, drama etc.

Surprise Ending

There are still traditional stories that do not lend themselves to inverted pyramid style. For instance, there is the story with the surprise ending, a rare story these days. Compare the examples below

INVERTED PYRAMID

The 18-month-old son of East High School janitor Mark Rourke was unhurt on Friday when he crawled into his father's car, pulled it out of gear, and rode it down a hill where it struck another car

Rouke said he had put the boy, Gerald in the car and was trying to get in himself when the boy pulled the gearshift

The car parked in front of Rouke's home at 222S. 12th St., rolled backward about 50 feet and struck a parked car

SURPRISE ENDING

Police on Friday decided not to book a young "driver" involved in an accident on 12th street

The youngster was behind the wheel of a car that careened backward down a hill and trucked a parked car

The driver was Gerald Rouke, son of East High janitor Mark Rouke.

The car was parked in front of the Rouke's home at 222 S. 12th St. when Gerald who had been put in the car by his father, pulled it out of gear

Gerald is 18 months old

Personality Interview

The personality interview/profile, in which the writer sketches with words the representation of one individual, is another type of story that cannot be handled with the inverted pyramid. Here the writer may back into the story, perhaps with an anecdote from the subject's life.

On the rare occasions, writers may use a quote from the person as the lead, but only if it's a great quote.

Action Stories

Another type of story that requires a different approach is the action story. This is most effectively handled by a chronological telling. For instance, if a dog walks into your college, your story will be more interesting if you don't simply state the facts that the dog appeared, sniffed around for a while, and was finally chased out

You may want to begin with the dog entering the building, then give an account of the activities that following, telling how the dog stopped first in room 2 and was chased, from there to radio studio when it ruined on air broadcasting and so on the last paragraph might be about the dog rushing out the door off to the streets

Combination Style

An increasingly popular way of writing news stories combines the summary lead and the chronological style. The writer summarizes in the first paragraph and then tells the rest of the story in the order in which it occurred. Thus the story of the dog might begin;

A dog with a cold nose for news on Monday strolled into the journalism class at Dar es Salaam School of Journalism, saw that his help wasn't need, took the grand tour of the college entering the left open door radio studio disturbing on air presenters before being expelled

After the summary, the next paragraph would start the chronological unfolding of the story

The dog's presence became known during second period when he stuck his nose in the staff offices

Sidebar

The sidebar refers to a story that relates to a main report of what happened but kept separate from another on the same subject.

This kind of story requires some approach other than the inverted-pyramid style.

For instance in the case of a major storm, the main story (**Mainbar**) tells about the number of deaths and amount of damage

A sidebar might be the eyewitness account of a survivor or an interview with an official of the National Weather Service describing how the storm developed. A sidebar adds the main story, providing extra details or “**color**”. Often sidebar material can be handled in a chart or graph or other infographic. All elements must be packaged together in readable amount