

Chapter 1 : Steps in Writing a Feature Story | Career Trend

A feature story is an essay written by a journalist or news reporter on varied subjects of human interest. It can be a profile of someone or about some event.

Write about the person without stating any of your own opinions in the story. Quote at least two other people who know the subject of your story well. Get an action photo of your subject – either take it yourself or get one from them. A list of sources and contact information is required. Your story should be between and words, unless otherwise specified by your editor. It is important that you begin work on this or any assignment immediately because it will take you several hours to conduct interviews and write a good story. Additionally, your sources may not be able to set aside time to interview, if you wait until the last moment. Choosing a Topic for Your Story Pick something newsworthy to many people, not just to you. Being in a sorority, doing community service, and playing the cello while working and maintaining a B-plus average is impressive. Many students successfully juggle many tasks. However, if the same student was the only person to win a national award for community service or just got signed by a professional orchestra, that would be newsworthy. Similarly, being a member of a varsity sports team takes talent but it is not newsworthy. In addition, keep in mind: The person is old news. Choose someone you have access to and whom you can interview several times, if necessary. Make sure the person is OK with being written about in a story that may potentially be published. Avoid writing about close friends, significant others, family members and anyone who has authority over you e. This is a conflict of interest. Remember, you must be able to interview the person you are writing about. In addition, you will need at least two other sources. How to Write a Profile Story A profile story is a portrait of a person in words. Like the best painted portraits, the best profiles capture the character, spirit and style of their subjects. They delve beneath the surface to look at what motivates people, what excites them, what makes them interesting. Good profiles get into the heart of the person and find out what makes them tick. The problem is that lives are hard to fit into newspaper articles, no matter how much space is allotted for them. Reporters who simply try to cram into a profile all the facts they can come up with inevitably end up with something more like a narrative version of a resume than a journalism story. Like all other stories, profiles must have an angle, a primary theme. That theme should be introduced in the lead, it should be explored and often it will be returned to at the end of the story. Good profiles - and all good journalism stories - show, instead of telling. Use all five senses when you interview someone. What are they wearing? Do they fiddle nervously with their pencil? Is there a chocolate smudge on their shirt? Is their hair stylishly spiked? Because a profile cannot be complete without quotes - there is no way to write a profile without extensive interviewing. Frequently, more than one interview is necessary unless the writer already knows his subject well Good profiles also contain quotes from people who know the subject of your story well. Spice your story with the words of family, friends, enemies and the subjects themselves. Finally, good profiles strike the appropriate tone. Think about your profile - is it someone who is involved in a serious issue, like eating disorders? You probably want to be more serious in your tone. Is it someone playful - a comic book artist, perhaps? You can be more playful. But remember - your personal opinion is not appropriate. You are there to merely paint a picture of this person - to let the facts speak for themselves. Examples Click here to see examples of good profiles written by my former journalism students. All of these stories were eventually published in newspapers. Step-By-Step Guide Follow these steps when working on your profile story: Decide what your angle is: What is interesting or unusual about this person? All of these things will affect the direction you take with your story as well as how freely your subject talks with you Get background info: Ask him to e-mail you his resume. You may find something interesting in the resume. What inspired this choice? Why is this rewarding for her? Do your research before you show up! Talk to people who know them well friends, coaches, coworkers, mentors, parents, siblings, even enemies. Group questions into categories. The initial interview should focus on making the subject comfortable as well as getting general background information out of the way. The writer should try to make his subject as comfortable as possible. In some situations, the interviews should be held in neutral territory, but for some subjects the interview may go

smoother is he is in a familiar atmosphere. Regardless of where the interview takes place, it should always begin with small talk - develop a rapport with the subject. And once you begin the official interview, start with the easy questions first to get them talking about themselves. Thank them for their time and tell them the purpose of your interview. Come prepared with several questions, but let a natural conversation develop. A good reporter begins an interview with a set of questions, but knows when to add impromptu questions that will get a subject to continue on a train of thought if it sounds interesting. Be conversational but let the source do most of the talking. Never supply or suggest an answer. Be patient and wait for it. Good reporting skills equal good observation and listening skills. It is a good idea to interview a person in their office, classroom or home if possible because a reporter will always learn more about person by watching him in his environment not yours. Does she have knitting on a corner of her desk? Does she wear a locket every day; whose picture is inside? Does she flinch every time she sees someone toss a bit of trash on the ground? Batteries die, tapes get misplaced or stolen, things happen. Your notes will provide a backup and save you time. Reviewing and transcribing your entire interview will take forever. Rather, keep notes, review them and figure out which quotes you want to use. Then go back and listen to the tape to make sure you quote them correctly. You can ask your subject the standard background information just to get the routine stuff out of the way and then move on to other questions. Where did you go to college? What degrees do you have? What, if any, further degrees or certifications are you pursuing? Do you have any other special training that has prepared you for your career? Where have you worked before this job? Are you involved in any community organizations charities, church, etc. What are your hobbies? Where did you grow up? Did you move around a lot? If yes, how did this affect you? If no, how did the stability of living in one place all your life affect you? Are there any political or social issues you feel passionately about? Do you have a nickname? List your favorites book, movie or play, quote, poem, website, type of food or individual dish, music genre, song, band or individual musician, perfume, clothing style or designer, etc. Where have you traveled? Tell me about your current job activity, whatever? What attracted you to it? How do you break it down and handle everything? What are your greatest stresses and what causes you the most anxiety in your life? What is most rewarding about your job; what makes it all worthwhile?

Chapter 2 : Feature story - Wikipedia

To write a feature article, start with a sentence paragraph that draws your reader into the story. The second paragraph needs to explain why the story is important so the reader keeps reading, and the rest of the piece needs to follow your outline so you can make sure everything flows together how you intended.

Writing feature articles for magazines and newspapers is a great way for emerging writers and authors to build up their portfolio of work. However, there are many different elements to magazine writing and publishing that the feature writer needs to consider. How to write a feature article Markus Spiske via Flickr Creative Commons. Remember that each publication has a specific target audience, and a distinct style of writing. Also depending on the publication, not all magazines concentrate on trends and current events; those are mostly for weekly or daily magazines. One issue could be about the Australian Government and another on memoir; the main feature article details this theme in depth. Get to know the magazine and what kind of content they publish; we strongly suggest reading their previous articles before submitting one of your own. Mission for Story and the Publication: They can write for one or more publications at the same time and are paid per article or per word. Freelancers are in charge of their own invoicing and tax. However, one of the much-loved benefits of freelancing is the fact that these writers get to work at their own pace, on their own schedule. Your work will be passed to editors who will give you feedback on how to improve the article. Usually the team and you will have regular meetings to decide on future content scheduling and subject matter. Is it interesting enough to write about? If you build your story around a unique and compelling idea, your odds of publishing it increase dramatically. Often, a perfectly good project will go unpublished because the premise on which it is based is too predictable, commonplace, or over-published. The Mean Old Structure: Like other articles, the feature has a basic structure. The shape depends on the style of your magazine varies but most feature articles have three acts, just like a story or an essay. It has a headline, an introduction; forming as one, then a main body and a conclusion. Structure is very important when telling a story, especially for a feature article, it is what holds the piece together clearly. Cheers to the Headline: Probably one of the important tasks of writing a feature article for a magazine is coming up with an effective headline. A headline means to highlight the central idea of the article in a catchy, clever way. Think of this as a preview to the rest of your feature article. The introduction needs to be compelling enough that it is seen at a publishable standard. This is where all the details of who, what, why and how are revealed. It is the explanation and the proof. Include all your facts, statistics, and quotes to support your argument. This is where all your hard-earned work pays off by resulting in a compelling and accurate piece. Depending on the publication, some magazines require their writers to supply original images or photographs as well. A conclusion is the final statement that brings together all your ideas and evidence.

Chapter 3 : Teaching kids how to write magazine articles and feature stories in news

Writing ledes for feature stories is a very different craft than writing hard-news ledes. Hard-news ledes need to get all the important points of the story - the who, what, where, when, why and how - into the very first sentence.

It also helps to provide a deeper context for everyone working on sub-items related to a larger feature. Writing user stories for agile or scrum is easy. Why Write User Stories? Precise and simple communication Simply listing a set of tasks for your team, while sometimes effective, can be confusing. This can stem from a number of causes: The user story makes it clear that the integration needs to result in GitHub activity being tracked in Sprintly. Software development teams are always on a time-crunch. User stories are easy to understand, relatively easy to write, and easy to maintain. A user story is written in plain English, which avoids confusion with unfamiliar terminology or jargon. During time sensitive projects, quickly pushing out several user stories works great at providing your team with an overall understanding of the project. Details and sub-items can be added as needed, but quickly defining the user stories will get everyone working on relevant tasks sooner. Allows room for interpretation, creativity, and conversation Nobody wants to be given a list and told exactly what to work on or build. It is also useful in eliminating hidden assumptions team-mates might have about a task. A user story answers 3 important questions: Who are you building this for? What are you building? Why are you building this? Answering these questions will tell your team the specific circumstances to build by so that they can work appropriately. For example, take a look at how the context of a user story is greatly affected by one of the three components: As a user, I want to filter items by item type so that I can create a report on everything we did this month for my boss. Notice how changing one component of a user story would change your approach entirely? In the second example, you would likely create a function to export the data so it can be shared and presented. Each component adds a necessary layer of context to give your team a proper start. A user story immediately directs the focus to a specific circumstance which provokes further discussion and careful revision. The end result is that your team becomes more focused on delivering solutions to user problems as opposed to merely delivering functional code. You should be able to prioritize and rearrange user stories in any way with no overlap or confusion. As previously discussed, a good user story can be reworked or modified to best suit the business. User stories are not an explicit set of tasks. User stories need to be valuable. By this, we mean valuable for the business or the customer. A good user story can be estimated. A rough estimate is beneficial to allow teams to rank and schedule their priorities. We definitely recommend keeping your user stories small. The larger a story is, the harder it is to estimate and easier it is to get caught up in sub items that should have probably been their own stories. Before a user story is written, it is essential that a criteria to test it is in place. Outlining the testability first ensures that the story actually accomplishes the goal you are trying to achieve. A story is not finished until it is tested. For maximum productivity and team alignment, make sure your team knows how their work will be tested. We tend to view testability as the fourth major component of a user story. At Sprintly we consider any project that contains sub-components a good candidate for a user story. Sub-items are tasks or tests you can list under your user story to provide a clearer vision of what needs to be done before the user story is complete. Sub-items are great for providing additional direction and details for what needs to be done. Take this user story for example: The more communication there is around stories and tasks, the better the outcome. Here are some common pitfalls you should avoid. On the other hand, reworking a story to decrease the scope should be a welcome time saver for your team. Sometimes teams might go so far as to take simple technical tasks and conceive those as stories. This is sometimes because they feel stories need to be broken down into smaller and smaller pieces. Other times it comes from the way a team tracks velocity and could be a symptom of your team not understanding the difference between tracking effort versus results. If your team can understand what needs to be done, you are doing the right thing. User stories are a great tool to aid your software development process. We hope our overview on user stories will help you and your team get started. Sprintly requires no configuration or training and your team can be up and running in seconds.

Chapter 4 : Journalism Education: How To Write A Profile Story

A feature story for TV news can be more difficult to write than a hard news story. There are rules that govern hard news coverage, but feature stories are all about the reporter's storytelling ability.

It can be a profile of someone or about some event. It can also be about your pet, favorite food or dresses and so on. When writing a good feature story, it requires certain basic and special skills to make it appealing and generally persuasive. Preparation Read or watch different kinds of features and stories. Reading and observing can help you understand the nuances of presenting your ideas clearly and concisely. Study the language, ideas, presentation and the wrap-up patterns of various feature stories. Be sure about the purpose of writing the feature story. It can be for dissemination of information, appreciation and instructional. Learn how to distinguish one from the other Visualize the reaction of your reader. Reflect if you can draw the attention of the reader by your presentation. Identify the sources and collect all the relevant information. If you can, take surveys. You can request people to fill in questionnaires or take interviews, sift through them and retain whatever is necessary. Discuss the feature story with friends and colleagues and get their feedback. They can provide valuable insights by looking objectively at your writing. Introspect and accept reasonably good opinions or ideas. The more features stories you create, the better you will become. Developing the Feature Story Come up with a catchy short headline. It should communicate the essence of your story and build the curiosity of targeted readers. Follow a systematic path of presenting the feature story with an introduction, main body and the ending highlighting the purpose that you have already thought about. Weave a proper and continual thread to keep the reader glued to your writing. Write an impressive introduction. It can contain a thought-provoking question or an idea. Use an exclamation point or quotation marks wherever needed. Give a human touch to the feature story as deemed fit to make it more interesting. The plot should build up tension and not be boring. Insert facts or apparent facts depending on whether your feature story is based on real-life events or is fictitious. Use striking illustrations and anecdotes relevant to the topic. Conclude with a powerful message. Good wrap-up is a crucial aspect of any powerful feature story. Otherwise, it will fail to make the desired impact. Evaluate it as a neutral reader as it can help improve the overall presentation of the feature story. Get a second opinion from your friends or colleagues and encourage constructive criticism of your write-up. Tip Build the main body of the feature story comprehensively. Use the active voice as far as possible. It enlivens the plot or development of the story. Do not use long sentences, as reading them becomes drudgery. Do not make sweeping statements or insensitive remarks on touchy issues such as religion, ethnicity, culture, etc. Remember not to use too many punctuation symbols, as it will make your writing appear amateur and frivolous. Cite this Article A tool to create a citation to reference this article Cite this Article.

Structure of a Feature Story 1. Structure of a feature 2. Feature writing process 1. Finding the idea (topic and angle) 2.

Teaching kids how to start a newspaper 6: However, there is a side to journalism that does bring out a different style of writing and coverage. There is just as much merit in saying that good journalism expands into magazine-style publications, as it does newspapers. And, to be honest, the kids in your class are probably more familiar with magazines than they are with hard news. Teach kids the differences between a newspaper, a magazine and a feature story. The first step, of course, is to know what a magazine and a feature story are, in comparison to a newspaper. We gave some tips on writing news copy in earlier lessons, but those tips may not always apply to magazine or feature writing. This is because the audience, style, timeliness and length are going to be different. Magazines and feature articles are longer, and more in depth. Feature articles are what usually show up in magazines, though they can be found in newspapers as well. They also have broader inclusions of acceptable topics. The elements that make a news story are stringent, whereas the elements that make a magazine or feature story could still include those relevant factors, while also highlighting a new angle, with a more focused approach. This is to make room for advertisements. Thus, the writing can include things like adjectives, if it adds to the enjoyment of reading the story. This article we found explains that there are 4 main elements that make a magazine different from a newspaper. To use their words, they are: This PDF we found online highlights the types of feature articles, as well as great vocabulary to know when producing a feature or magazine article. It can also be used as a full lesson plan for teaching kids how to write a feature article. It also explains that the main difference has to do with writing style. Use practice lessons to teach kids about magazines and features. Practice makes perfect! While you are teaching kids about how to start a newspaper, you can also teach them a new facet of journalistic writing: Thankfully, there are some great resources ready-to-go for your lesson planning on this topic. There is the PDF we linked to above, and these:

Chapter 6 : How to Write a Feature Story for a School Newspaper

To write a strong feature it's not enough to just give the facts. Your piece must have the most essential element in any story: It must be a story. In nonfiction, like fiction, what readers need more than anything is a reason to care, to want to know what happens next, how it will all turn out.

All these factors put pressure on the media to give their audiences both news and features. In a version of featurizing, pressure from advertisers or lobbyists often result in writing that appears at first blush to be news when it is, in fact, promotion for a product, idea, or policy. When a hard news story breaks--for example, the sinking of a ferry in the Greek islands--it should be reported with a hard news lead. Soft leads and stories are more appropriate when a major news event is not being reported for the first time: Some editors dispute the emphasis on soft writing and refer to it as jell-o journalism. Feature writing can stand alone, or it can be a sidebar to the main story, the mainbar. A sidebar runs next to the main story or elsewhere in the same edition, providing an audience with additional information on the same topic. Types of Features Personality profiles: A personality profile is written to bring an audience closer to a person in or out of the news. Interviews and observations, as well as creative writing, are used to paint a vivid picture of the person. A trend story examines people, things or organizations that are having an impact on society. Trend stories are popular because people are excited to read or hear about the latest fads. Through extensive research and interviews, in-depth stories provide a detailed account well beyond a basic news story or feature. A backgrounder--also called an analysis piec--adds meaning to current issues in the news by explaining them further. These articles bring an audience up-to-date, explaining how this country, this organization, this person happens to be where it is now. Writing and Organizing Feature Stories Feature writers seldom use the inverted-pyramid form. Instead, they may write a chronology that builds to a climax at the end, a narrative, a first-person article about one of their own experiences or a combination of these. Their stories are held together by a thread, and they often end where the lead started, with a single person or event. Here are the steps typically followed in organizing a feature story: The theme is similar to the thesis of a scholarly paper and provides unity and coherence to the piece. It should not be too broad or too narrow. Several factors come into play when choosing a theme: Has the story been done before? Is the story of interest to the audience? Does the story have holding power emotional appeal? What makes the story worthy of being reported? The theme answers the question, "So what? A summary may not be the best lead for a feature. A lead block of one or two paragraphs often begins a feature. Rather than put the news elements of the story in the lead, the feature writer uses the first two or three paragraphs to set a mood, to arouse readers, to invite them inside. Then the news peg or the significance of the story is provided in the third or fourth paragraph, the nut graph. Because it explains the reason the story is being written, the nut graph--also called the "so what" graph--is a vital paragraph in every feature. The nut graph should be high in the story. Do not make readers wait until the 10th or 11th paragraph before telling them what the story is about. The body provides vital information while it educates, entertains, and emotionally ties an audience to the subject. The ending will wrap up the story and come back to the lead, often with a quotation or a surprising climax. Important components of the body of a feature story are background information, the thread of the story, transition, dialogue, and voice. Provide vital background information. If appropriate, a paragraph or two of background should be placed high in the story to bring the audience up to date. Write clear, concise sentences. Sprinkle direct quotations, observations and additional background throughout the story. Paragraphs can be written chronologically or in order of importance. Connect the beginning, body and conclusion of the story. Because a feature generally runs longer than a news story, it is effective to weave a thread throughout the story, which connects the lead to the body and to the conclusion. This thread can be a single person, an event or a thing, and it usually highlights the theme. Connect paragraphs with transitional words, paraphrases, and direct quotations. Transition is particularly important in a long feature examining several people or events because it is the tool writers use to move subtly from one person or topic to the next. Transition keeps readers from being jarred by the writing. Use dialogue when possible. Feature writers, like fiction writers, often use dialogue to keep a story moving. Of course, feature writers cannot make up dialogue;

they listen for it during the reporting process. Another key element that holds a feature together is voice, the "signature" or personal style of each writer. Voice is the personality of the writer and can be used to inject colour, tone, and subtle emotional commentary into the story. The blatant intrusion of a distinctive voice into news writing has been called gonzo journalism--an irresponsible, if entertaining, trend in contemporary writing according to traditionalists. Conclude with a quotation or another part of the thread. A feature can trail off like a news story or it can be concluded with a climax. Often, a feature ends where the lead started, with a single person or event.

Chapter 7 : How to Write a Feature Article (with Pictures) - wikiHow

A feature article is the main story in the magazine that focuses on a special event, place or person in great detail. There are many types of feature articles, whether they're creatively focused or newsworthy, however, they always have one thing in common: human interest. Writing feature articles.

Typically, you only want to have one of them per issue. It is a blend of a news article with a bit of interpretation of the facts without giving an opinion as to what the solution should be. It can be written like a News Article , but it does more than just report the news. It interprets the news. It makes predictions on the consequences of the event or action being reported. It provides a reader with a clearer understanding, hopefully, of the long term effects of the subject of your article. For example, if the principal of your school institutes a new dress code policy, a feature article on the subject might include in no particular order: The facts of the new dress code the who, why, where, what, when, and how. A prediction on how it will be received by the student body and the staff and faculty. Predictions of potential problems the dress code might create. Comparison to other schools with similar dress codes. An analysis of the reasons behind the new dress code. Quotes from various sources. References to other articles from other reputable sources on dress codes. An analysis of problems the dress code is supposed to solve and if it will be effective based on data supplied by other schools doing something similar. Among the newly banned clothing items are gang colors and short shorts. All students have by now signed an agreement to abide by the new dress code, and teachers have been tasked with the responsibility of enforcing the new requirements. This new code does, however, come with some unintended consequences that the administration may not have considered. This answers most of the main questions, and from here a feature article can launch into the analysis and predictions as to the outcome of the new dress code policy. Take the reader on a journey of in-depth analysis and thought. You want your article to be thought provoking, but also very thorough, covering as many angles as you can. End with a concluding paragraph that wraps up the most salient points of your article. A feature story is the main, front-page article found on your newspaper. It should have the largest title, the most compelling images, and provoke the most thought and discussion. Below are a few of the s of templates available to you.

Chapter 8 : How to Write a Feature Story for TV News | Pen and the Pad

How to Write a Profile Feature Article s a student journalist, your mission is to inform your peers. Your fellow students look to your work to help them understand the nuances of the environments they inhabit, and to accurately represent their experiences and views.

Subscribe to our FREE email newsletter and download free character development worksheets! Everyone seemed to be writing about Sinatra. Talese remained in L. It was the best because Talese had put the work in, paid attention, and gone beyond an article about a man everyone knew of. Your piece must have the most essential element in any story: It must be a story. In nonfiction, like fiction, what readers need more than anything is a reason to care, to want to know what happens next, how it will all turn out. And stories are driven by tension. First you have to find it. Then you have to tell it. Training Your Ear for Tension Stories are everywhere if you learn to look. Here are some ways to find them. Think of the whole story. When approaching a new story, look beyond the newsworthy item that led you there. But think about all that might have led to that moment. What might seem to you like a boring ribbon-cutting ceremony for a new business may really be the culmination of a lifelong dream for the owner. An ordinary high school graduation could be a moment of triumph for a student who overcame great obstacles to hold her diploma. In the end, it might not be about a game at all. Listen to everyone. Seek to be surprised. Let them jabber away. If the tension is not obvious from the start, it often shows itself through an offhand comment or some seemingly trivial fact. Uncovering those means talking not just to the big players in the story, but to everyone you can. I woke up one morning to discover that a well-known local panhandler had died. Ray was known for changing into three different suits throughout the day as he wandered downtown Flint, Mich. I thought his eccentricities were enough to write about—and really, they would have made a fine article. Those bits of information and anecdotes created a mosaic of Ray that brought him to life—and they also led me to Joshua Spencer, a local businessman who had been especially kind to Ray, even driving him to the doctor. What does a sick and lonely man talk about with one of the few people he trusts? It opened like this: Do you see it there? Hollandsworth opened the story by showing the now-elderly first generation of players in the stands at a recent game. He then went back in time to the exact, tense moment when one of those female players had the guts to ask for more practice time on the court. It was the scene that had lead to their current legacy: One day after practice, Redin noticed a group of coeds standing by the gym door. They were members of the Wayland Girls Basket-ball Club, which played a handful of games each year against nearby high schools and junior colleges. A young woman swallowed nervously and told Redin that the Girls Basket-ball Club would like more practice time at the gym. They also wanted to play more games against better opponents. And who, exactly, would you want to play? Well, said the young woman, maybe you could help us schedule games against some of those AAU teams. Redin stared at the group, not sure how to respond. By getting his sources to relay past dialogue, Hollandsworth was able to show the information as well as tell it. And because he was able to find the real root of his story, all the details about who the girl basketball players were before the team started—who they played, how much, the year it all started—become more than just information to his readers. They now mean something. Ask the most important question. Everyone has a story. Everyone wonders what will happen next in their lives and how it all will turn out. What will happen or would have happened if? Ask people about it. Often, those answers—and not all the surface facts so many reporters are obsessed with—are your stories. You have to seduce them, keep them engaged and make it all pay off. Some people reject the idea that all stories must follow the old formula of having a beginning, middle and end, arguing that a story can begin in the middle or end at the beginning. Another way to think about a feature story, then, is this: In fiction, readers go in knowing there will be tension, and this is almost always established early: Nick Carraway watches a mysterious neighbor named Gatsby reach for a green light. Harry Potter is the boy who lived. So it is with nonfiction. The story is approximately 15, words long—about a quarter of a short novel—and yet the tension is established in the first few paragraphs. Talese sets a tense scene in the first paragraph, showing Sinatra sitting in a bar, and in the next paragraph, shown here, he reveals the tension that will drive the rest of the

story. Sinatra had been working in a film that he now disliked, could not wait to finish; he was tired of all the publicity attached to his dating the year-old Mia Farrow, who was not in sight tonight; he was angry that a CBS television documentary of his life, to be shown in two weeks, was reportedly prying into his privacy, even speculating on his possible friendship with Mafia leaders; he was worried about his starring role in an hour-long NBC show entitled Sinatra's "A Man and His Music, which would require that he sing 18 songs with a voice that at this particular moment, just a few nights before the taping was to begin, was weak and sore and uncertain. He was the victim of an ailment so common that most people would consider it trivial. But when it gets to Sinatra it can plunge him into a state of anguish, deep depression, panic, even rage. Frank Sinatra had a cold. You can ease into the tension with a scene, as Talese does, or you can jump into it with the first line, but the tension—the reason we should care—must be there from the start, giving your readers a reason to keep going, to wonder what will happen next. The best devices to keep them interested are all those scenes you found in your reporting. Talese would map out his stories and then try to make each point he needed to make—to insert each fact the reader needed to know—through scenes. Scenes, however, can still drive the way the story unfolds. Look for the different milestones in your own story, the highs and lows the key players go through that define their journeys. Let those moments, those key scenes, drive the story forward, and your reader along with it. Sometimes the tension is not yet resolved in life, but the story must, of course, end on the page. Those can be the best endings. What would happen to the old pictures? Who would replace these fixtures? And so instead of trying to resolve the tension, I let it hang: The only question is who. In the meantime, Curnow and other members of the new generation have the pictures to look at—the heroes and mysterious people who sat in the seats before them. People who may be sitting at the next table, older versions of the people above. An unknown figure slumped over the bar. A woman staring past the camera. A final thought on tension: And if you force it, your readers will know. You still may have a fine article on your hands. But never forget that tension is often so tied up in everyday life that it seems invisible—except to the writer with the skills to discover it, mine it and tell it. Want more on writing strong feature articles? Get a no-nonsense guide to the world of writing articles for online markets, magazines, newspapers, and more.

A feature story is a human interest story. These stories are all about the details, and they allow a writer to get creative. Such stories should have a powerful hook and compelling details to keep.

But before we get into how to write them, let us remind you to take backups of your website. So that if something goes wrong, you still have the blog posts you have written and can quickly restore them. All about the feature lead Imagine catching up with a friend over a cuppa and having them describe a recent vacation. Instead, if your friend pulls out a souvenir for you from a local bazaar there and describes the scene. Then you are fascinated almost immediately and want to hear more. So too, with a feature lead! A feature lead is often described as a conversation that anyone would like to be a part of. Feature writing needs to have strategic communication because it introduces your story just like a news lead, it is informative and informal without being frivolous, and sets the tone for what will follow. Instead of drawing you in with hard news, facts and figures, it softly lures you with anecdotes, quotes, colorful descriptions and narratives which are factual, yet presented in a non-formal manner. Woo your reader in the first para A feature lead is quite different from a lead in a news story or even an opinion piece on a blog. In a news story, you are informing your reader about events, situations, incidents etc, without beating around the bush. You have to woo the reader in the first para itself. I am a feature writer – when writing a news story, I seldom sweat over the lead. Instead, most of my time and energy is spent getting my story right. However, with a feature lead, I have to spend a fair amount of time to ensure that the first para hooks my readers. Unlike news story leads that are shorter and get straight to the point, feature articles most often begin with a delayed or soft lead. A feature lead is allowed the freedom to linger, wander and eventually connect to your main story. This second lead gives context to your story and makes it easy to connect your feature lead to your story. Compare this to the narrative lead in this film review here. It gives a human element to a piece of news while adding depth and perspective. It is because you want the best start to your story, that you must give it time. Take time to flip through your research and interview notes. Relive your experiences while working on your story. While researching on the story did you stumble upon other stories? Do you remember the noise or smell of streets you walked through, the voice of the interviewee who spoke to you? The details that catch your attention are often the ones that make for absorbing leads. In this story for the New Yorker, the writer uses an anecdotal lead to begin his story on surveillance today. He turns back in time to look at examples from history to make it an interesting start. Write many leads Put down the various options you have to write your feature lead. Write about two or three sentences of each and decide which reads well and fits your story. You are allowed to add drama, transport your reader to a time and place where your story begins. While writing a feature lead, if I find myself stuck with the first few sentences I write one or two leads and see which flows into my story well. In a recent article I wrote about a walk with an ant- expert, I wrote down a few leads – one about the kinds of ants we found on our walks, one with my experiences with ants – that of being mostly bitten; one about the amazing feats of ants and so on. In the end, I chose to begin by narrating the circumstances in which the walk began, so readers could experience it. His unlikely public stance was in response to taking me on an insect trail in a city park. Tell it like it is An easy way to begin a feature lead is to visualize that you are telling your reader a story. Crafting his sentences beautifully, he allows us to travel with him and experience what he would have. Quote leads work well for reports that need to keep to the point. What must a feature lead start with? Leads that sum up important what-when-where kind of details works best for report stories rather than soft features. There are lead styles that work almost always even though are used so frequently. They describe a place, person or an event with great care so the reader can envision where the story takes place or what would have happened Narrative leads: Narrative leads are similar to descriptive leads but use strong action verbs and sometimes even dialogues are employed to make narration effective or to recreate situations powerfully. Everyone loves a good story. Anecdotal leads where interesting stories, metaphors or events make for a riveting read. Depending on your write up, your lead can take even as much time as rest of your article, but in the end, this is worth it. Make sure it is relevant to rest of your story. All artistic and imaginary meandering must rejoin the

reader to the focus of the story. The lead should facilitate the transition or the nut graph a simple declarative sentence or paragraph in the piece which talks about what the writer intends to do in the paras that follow. That said what you are writing is of no use if you lose them. Which is why we recommend taking backups of your website.