



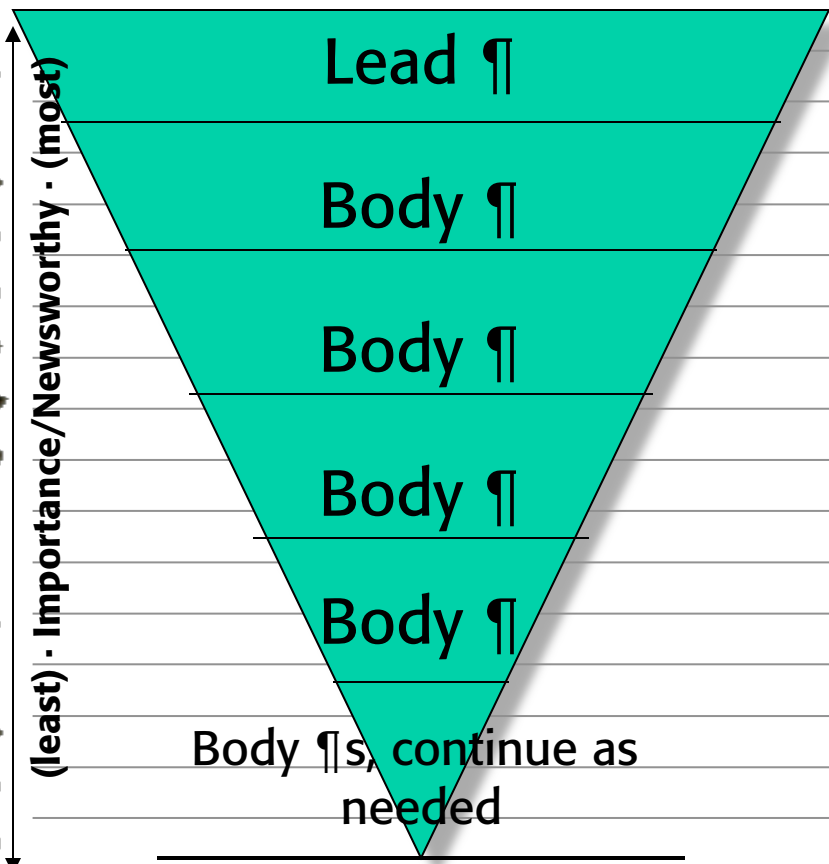
Summary News Lead ¶ Writing Information

Vince DeMiero

Instructor/Adviser

Mountlake Terrace High School

The Inverted Pyramid Style



- This style works best for summary news stories
- Usually a single sentence lead ¶
- Body ¶s are organized in order of importance
- Logical order of information replaces clunky transitions
- No summary endings

What do we call this stuff?

Man dies in training at Ship Canal ←

by Eli Sanders ←

Seattle Times staff reporter ←

A 55-year-old man died yesterday after his heart apparently stopped during a training exercise at the Seattle Maritime Academy in Ballard.

Firefighters who were called to the scene at 12:57 p.m. yesterday found the man had already been pulled from the Ship Canal by bystanders. He had apparently jumped into the canal as part of the exercise and was wearing a wet suit, said Sue Stangl, spokeswoman for the Seattle Fire Department.

"There was a report that he was only in the water for a few seconds," Stangl said last night.

When a Fire Department medical unit arrived at the training facility, at 4455 Shilshole Ave. N.W., bystanders had already begun CPR on the man, Stangl said.

• This is the headline

• This is the byline

• This is the staff line

• This is the lead ¶

• These are the body ¶s

• This is a direct quote

• This is an indirect quote

Summary News Lead ¶s

- Summarizes the essential, newsworthy information of a story
- Usually one sentence
- The “one breath” rule
- It’s always a complete sentence (S/V/DO)
- It’s not a headline
- If the information or story is too complex, then write two stories
- Avoid lists in lead ¶s
- Names in lead ¶s?
- 5Ws, 1H, 1A, 1C
 - What also:
 - Who – How
 - Why – Attribution
 - When – Context
 - Where



More Summary News Lead ¶s

- Never start a summary news lead ¶ with the “when” or the “where”
- Never write a “that” lead (there’s no “T” in the 5Ws)
- When should you use attribution in a lead ¶?
- Context is critical
- Localize
- Most newsworthy, most important and most recent information goes first
- Your lead ¶ is your story’s blueprint



Evaluate These Leads

Being a high school student, you have most likely woken up late and been tardy.

Now imagine having to wake up at least 15 minutes earlier than you should, just to arrive at school on time.

Every U.S. teenager anticipates this day.

Just hours into your 16th birthday, you've already got the car keys in hand and a brand new driver's license.



Evaluate These Leads

Two people were killed when a truck collided with a car yesterday in Mill Creek.

A 10-month-old girl and her mother were killed yesterday when the car in which they were driving was hit by a truck in Mill Creek.



Evaluate These Leads

A Seattle widow has died of cancer.

A Seattle widow who won an out-of-court settlement of an estimated \$500,000 from an asbestos manufacturer has died of cancer she contended was caused by her exposure to the substance.



Evaluate These Leads

The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors met yesterday in regular session in the County Building.

The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors yesterday authorized reopening the Hall of Justice jail to house weekend prisoners.