How to Structure a News Story

The structure of a news story is the pattern of development that determines the order and placement of the elements of parts of the story.

- Every news story should have a clear and obvious structure.
- The classic structure for most news stories is called the inverted-pyramid structure.
  - In a sense, the inverted-pyramid structure tells the story backwards.
  - The inverted-pyramid structure places facts in descending order of importance.
- When you run out of interesting things to say, stop writing.
- Feature stories are more likely to use structures other than the inverted-pyramid structure.
• The hourglass or champagne-glass structure uses a chronological storytelling technique.
• The Wall Street Journal structure begins with a soft lead followed by a “nut graf,” supporting points, and an ending that refers to the lead.
• Multiple-element stories mention several elements in the lead and cover each in a separate section of the story:
  • apples, oranges, and bananas
  • apples
  • apples
  • apples
  • oranges
  • oranges
  • oranges
  • bananas
  • bananas
  • bananas
• apples, oranges, and bananas
• Consider breaking out a part of the story to a sidebar or box.
• Let the content of the story determine the structure.
• Good quotes give life to a story.
• Always consider deleting the last paragraph.