

98-148: The Process to the Press (“StuCo College News”)

# **Elements of a College Newspaper Article**

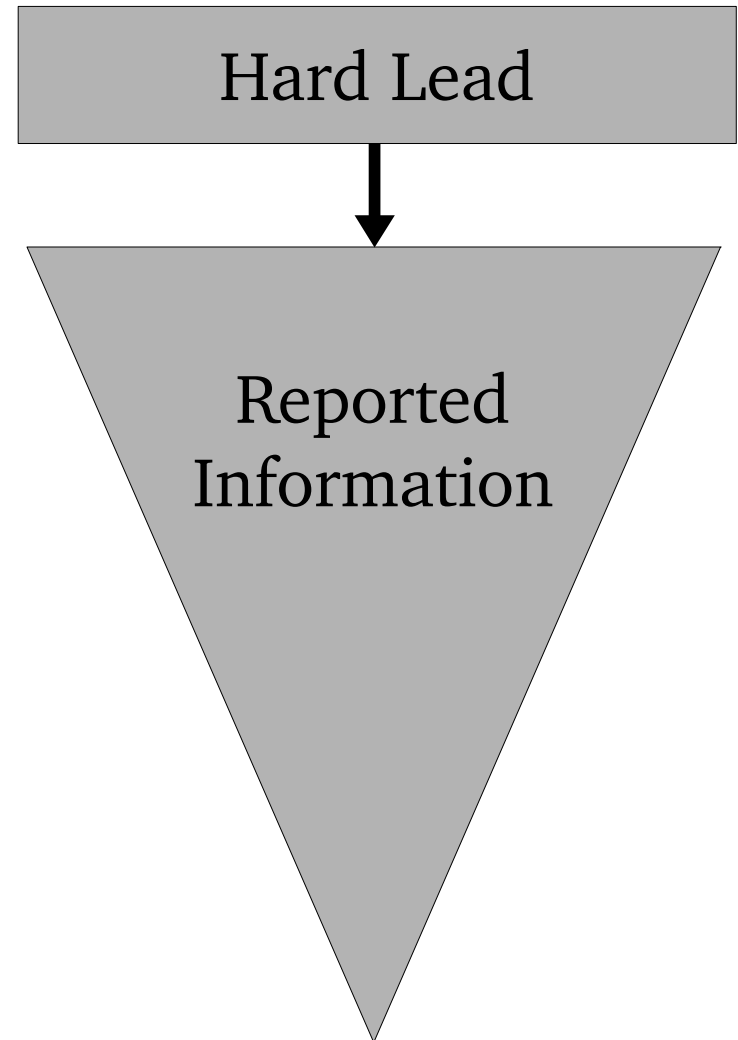
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# Table Slide of Contents

- General story formats
- Leads
- Journalistic style
- Direct and indirect quotes
- Ending the article
- Clarity

# Inverted Pyramid Format

- Start with quick summary or most important result
- Information arranged from most important to least important
- Ends with background details or what to expect next



# Inverted Pyramid Format

- The *New York Herald*, 1871:

Only two months gone, and what a change in my feelings! But two months ago, what a peevish, fretful soul was mine! What a hopeless prospect presented itself before your correspondent!

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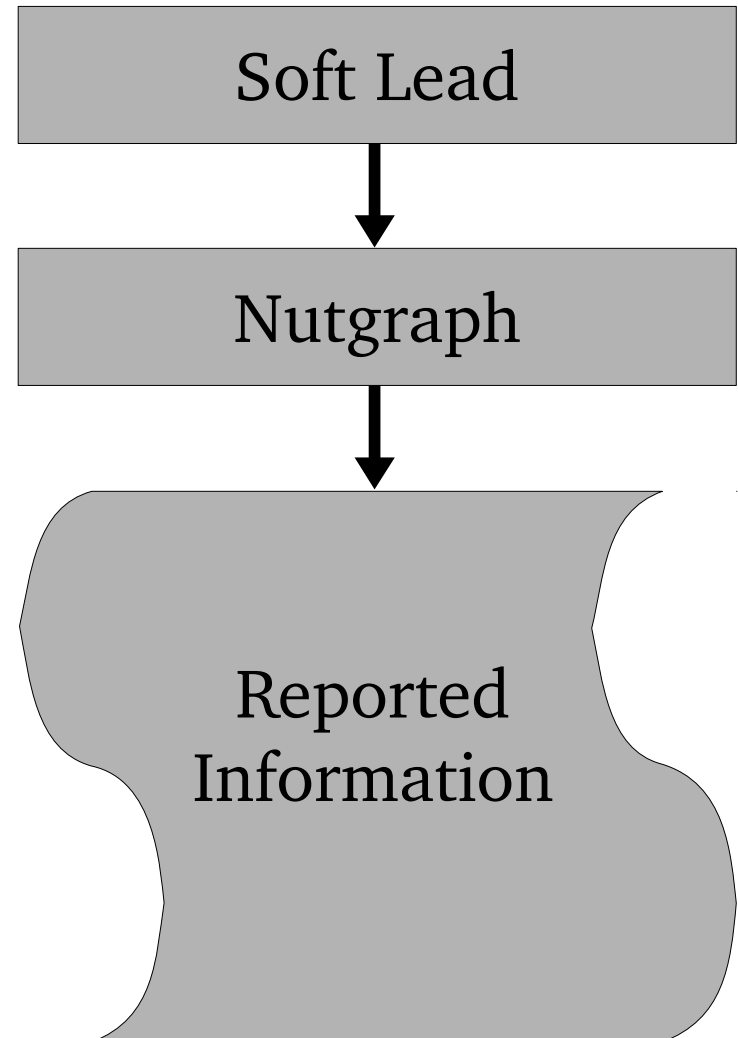
Only two months gone, and what a change in my feelings! But two months ago, what a peevish, fretful soul was mine! What a hopeless prospect presented itself before your correspondent!

- Today's version:

David Livingstone, the missionary-explorer missing for six years, has been found working in an African village on the shores of Lake Tanganyika.

# Feature Format

- Start with a scene, fact, or anecdote
- May follow with a denser “so what?” paragraph
- Various possibilities for flow of reported information



# So What's a Lead?

- First sentence and/or paragraph of the article
- Good leads
  - Emphasize interesting or important developments
  - Specific and accurately represent story's focus
  - Use brief, strong language
- Bad leads
  - Confuse, bore, or lose the reader
  - Misrepresent the story
  - Get lost in long, flowery, or formulaic language

# Lead Example (1)

Every year, several Carnegie Mellon students join Goldman Sachs as interns and full-time employees. The company is a global financial services firm that specializes in investment banking, securities, and investment management. As part of its continued efforts to recruit students, the company hosted a leadership panel discussion in Rangos Hall last Wednesday.



# Lead Example (1)

Six representatives from financial services firm Goldman Sachs hosted a panel discussion on leadership in Rangos Hall last Wednesday. The event, titled “Leadership and the Transition from University to the Working World,” showed how the skills gained from leadership roles on campus can carry over into a work atmosphere and give transitioning students an edge.

# Lead Example (2)

Many young people spend their college years searching for often-elusive career paths that will hopefully lead them to adult lives filled with professional success and personal happiness.

## Lead Example (2)

Many young people spend their college years searching for often-elusive career paths that will hopefully lead them to adult lives filled with professional success and personal happiness.

- Avoid evil “many people” or “some students” leads — did you take a poll?
- Tell a specific anecdote from your interviews
- You’re not writing a college admissions essay!

## Lead Example (3)

Charles Mastervich is studying humanities at Mount Aloysius College. Having contacted the institution's admissions office, he recently enrolled as a transfer student. The university allowed Mastervich to receive transfer credits on the basis of his previous educational history at the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown and Carnegie Mellon University.

However, Mastervich, unlike any ordinary transfer student, turns 80 years old this November.

## Lead Example (4)

It is 2007, and Joel Lindsey is getting ready to leave London to move to the United States. Sitting in Heathrow Airport, he pens the lyrics, “It’s time to get out of here, maybe come back a better man.” The lyrics will eventually become the song “Live Outside,” the final track in Boulevard of the Allies’ debut CD, *The Man in the Photograph*, released last May.

Boulevard of the Allies will be promoting the CD at a concert at the Underground on Friday.

# Filling in Body: Journalistic Style

- Prefer short, straightforward sentences and short paragraphs
- Show, don't tell
- Show a variety of people, “sides,” points of view
- Profile with honesty and without animosity
- Remember the qualities of “good” stories we discussed. Go for them!

# Filling in Body: Journalistic Style

- Need to efficiently communicate info to reader
- In most cases, you are neutral
  - No product to sell
  - No viewpoint to push
  - No argument to make
- Your **sources** provide the products, viewpoints, and arguments
  - Properly attribute both words and ideas

# Style Example (1)

It seems that all those Sunday rehearsals and plans ultimately created an extremely strong and capable theatrical ensemble, a group that will go on to achieve many more successes in New York City, perhaps continuing to strengthen its ensemble in New York or maybe even turning its attention to animation in the years to come — there seems to be an infinite number of possibilities for the PigPen Theatre Company, an infinite number of paths from which to pick and choose.



## Style Example (2)

This dedicated fan base was evident at Green's lecture, which had over 500 attendees. After a brief introduction by author Siobhan Vivian — a Pittsburgh author whose most recent novel, *Not That Kind Of Girl*, came out this past September — Green came out and was promptly greeted by screaming fans. He seemed in awe of the size of the crowd, admitting several times throughout the lecture that he had never spoken in front of such a large crowd before.

## Style Example (3)

The team also had to consider which parts of the data were relevant to a sustained change over time. Eisenstein explained, “Here is a word that only occurs in New York or only in Pennsylvania, and you have to ask yourself, is this a stable variation...? When we look at this a year from now, is it still going to be the case that we only see it in this part of the country, or will it spread to the whole country, or will it completely disappear off the map?”

# Referring to Things

- First reference: Spell names out in full; completely identify people
  - the University Athletic Association (UAA)
  - the College of Humanities and Social Sciences
  - Carnegie Mellon President Jared L. Cohon
  - sophomore computer science major Julie Ye
  - Patrick Dowd, the council representative for Ward 8

# Referring to Things

- Second reference: Use your introduced short names for organizations; last names for people
  - the UAA
  - H&SS
  - Cohon
  - Ye
  - Dowd

# The Importance of Quotes

- Quotes provide the opinion, personality, and viewpoints you're not allowed to write yourself
  - But you still must represent reality...
- Get them from primary, authoritative, and relevant — and numerous! — sources
- Use them early and throughout your article
- Be intelligent about direct vs. indirect quotes

# Direct Quotes

- Use when a person says something unique, uniquely, or important
- Put one in the first four paragraphs of your story
- Attribution (“Name said”) goes at the end of the first complete sentence of your quote
- Get them from at least three primary, authoritative, and relevant sources

# Direct Quotes

“Creating the actual bottles is also extremely wasteful,” Romero said. “It consumes a ton of energy, it pollutes the environment ... and more water is used in creating the bottles than is actually inside of them.”

“This not only falls upon our initiatives to support environmental conservation, but we also hope that students will notice CulinArt’s efforts in listening to student concerns and implementing solutions,” Cole said. “This decision is not only a win for the environment, but it is also a win for CulinArt and the Tap Water Project.”

# Indirect Quotes

- Use to cover other facts, minor details, and background information
- Use to summarize information that you don't have word for word
- Attribute them to their sources
- Watch out for Frankenstein's "partial quote" monster — it could end up saying anything!



# Indirect Quotes

Change over time comes from the upper working class and moves up, Eisenstein said, and could provide an entry point for changes in language.

In the article, Cable Green of the Washington State Board for Community & Technical Colleges said students pay \$1,000 a year for books.

# Partial Quotes

- Smith was “born in Oklahoma,” he said.
  - Smith was “born in Oklahoma.”
  - Smith said he was born in Oklahoma.
  - Smith was born in Oklahoma.
- 
- According to Grabowsky, this year’s mystery theme is a “dark and brooding” contrast to the “bright and fun” themes of past galas.

# The End of the Article

- Least important details
  - Event sponsorships, group's website, president's e-mail address, restaurant's hours, etc.
- Next step or next development in the story
  - Team's next game, group's next meeting, lecture's next speaker, researcher's next plans
- **Not your own speculation or interpretation**
- **Not the conclusion to a college essay**

# Finally, A Note on Clarity

- Write things that are easy to read
  - Write things that say what you want them to say
  - Do not write things that are false
  - Do not write things that are misleading
  - Do not write things that make no sense
- 
- Check these by re-reading every sentence of your article critically!

# Clarity: $2 + 2 = 5$ ?

Though Doha, Qatar, hosts Carnegie Mellon's academic programs, it is also home to modern structures such as the Ritz-Carlton Hotel.

Students interested in studying abroad are in luck, because the Study Abroad Fair last week was packed with travel opportunities.

# Clarity: Sentence Structure

As an average college student, Bali is a place I never thought I would end up.

The attack is called “Moved,” referencing the fact that Toomey lived and worked in Hong Kong for a year, according to *The Washington Post*.

# Clarity: Well, Obviously!

The discussion, titled “Leadership and the Transition from University to the Working World,” was intended to aid students facing the transition from the university environment to the corporate world.

The men’s track team excels on the track.

Oil is extracted from the ground.

# Clarity: Wait, What?!

Randy Pausch was used as a lightning rod this week to raise awareness of cancer and funds for the American Cancer Society (ACS) at Carnegie Mellon last week.



# Clarity: Wait, What?!

Laptops: They're small, efficient, and currently adorn the first floor of Hunt Library. Their owners are typing, stooped over, with some biting their nails, even though it's Friday and the first week back to school. Yet it has become a necessity rather than a luxury to own a laptop while attending college. It is the future, and Carnegie Mellon takes the lead in computer-based discovery as the No. 1 graduate program in computer science as determined by *U.S. News & World Report* in 2010.

# Summary

- Inverted pyramid vs. feature formats
- Write a strong, clear, informative lead
- Fill in article with information, not speculation or your own opinions
- Show, don't tell, via sources and quotes
- End with small details or what's up next, not a college essay conclusion
- Make sure what you wrote makes sense!