



# Writing a newspaper article



# First paragraph - Orienting the reader – 4w's

A newspaper article needs to guide the reader through the story.

In order to do this, in the opening paragraph, the writer needs to let the reader know:

- **When** the incident happened
- **Where** the incident happened
- **Who** was involved in the incident
- **What** happened

Collectively these are known as the 4 W's

# First paragraph – Orienting the reader – 4w's

Look at the following example.

*Disaster struck **last night** in **Ashted** when a massive 10kg bag of wine gums was maliciously stolen from **5H classroom** by a violent gang of thieves.*



Can you spot the 4w's?

**When** did the incident occur? **Where** did it occur? **Who** was involved? **What** happened?

# First paragraph - Grabbing the reader's attention

In addition to the 4w's, when writing a newspaper article, one of the first things that the writer needs to achieve is to get the reader to be interested in the article so that they want to read on.



Therefore, we wish to grab their attention.

To do this, the writer uses **strong adjectives, verbs and adverbs** to make it sound more exciting.

The writer may also include **specific facts** to emphasise the seriousness of the story.

# First paragraph - Grabbing the reader's attention

Look at the following example.

*Disaster struck last night in Ashted when a **massive 10kg** bag of wine gums was **maliciously** stolen from 5H classroom by a **violent** gang of thieves.*



What adjectives, adverbs and facts have been used to make the article more exciting?

# Second paragraph

## Telling the story

In writing a story, we normally start at the beginning of the story and then work chronologically towards the end of it.

This is not the case with writing a newspaper report. We wish to grab the reader's interest and attention straight away.

Therefore **we start our report at the end of the story** – we say what has happened.

Then, after the first paragraph where we tell the reader what has happened, in the second paragraph we then **go back to the beginning of the story** to tell the reader **how** the incident happened from the start of the story. We **tell the story from the beginning...**

# Second paragraph

## Telling the story - Description

Telling the story in a newspaper article is different from normal story writing in its use of description.

Normally, when we write a story, we use lots of descriptive language – adjectives and figurative language. However, when we write a newspaper article (apart from the first paragraph) **we do NOT include descriptive language**. We simply say what happened.

# Second paragraph

## Telling the story

An example of telling the story is as follows:

*Mr Harverson had been working late in his classroom when, at around 7pm, he had suddenly heard the door of his classroom being smashed down and four hooded men enter, carrying clubs in their hands. Instantly, Mr Harverson had been tied up by the robbers and threats made to him to reveal the location of his secret store of wine gums.*

What adjectives or figurative language can you see?



# Telling the story – only relevant points

Unlike a story, we **only include events which are relevant to the incident**. If we include events which are irrelevant to the story, they simply distract the reader. Look at the following text.

*It had been a beautiful sunny day and the birds in the trees were chirping merrily. Mr Harverson had just finished marking some rather difficult maths work in his brightly painted classroom when he had heard the old oak wood door of his classroom being smashed down and four hooded men enter, carrying some new shiny clubs in their hands. Instantly, Mr Harverson had been tied up using some blue and green striped rope by the robbers and threats made to him to reveal the location of his secret store of wine gums.*

Which points are irrelevant?

# The past perfect

In the 'Telling the story' section of the article, as the reader is being taken back to an earlier time in the story, the past perfect tense is used to indicate this

*Mr Harverson **had** been working late in his classroom when he **had** suddenly heard the door of his classroom being smashed down and four hooded men enter, carrying clubs in their hands. Instantly, Mr Harverson **had** been tied up by the robbers and threats made to him to reveal the location of his secret store of wine gums.*

Can you spot use of the past perfect in the above report?

# The passive voice

Newspaper reports are more formal than story writing. Therefore, to make the report sound more formal, the passive voice is used.

*Mr Harverson had been working late in his classroom when he had suddenly heard the door of his classroom **being smashed down** and four hooded men enter, carrying clubs in their hands. Instantly, Mr Harverson had **been tied up by** the robbers and **threats made to him** to reveal the location of his secret store of wine gums.*

Can you spot use of the passive voice in the above report?

# Quotes

After we have told how the story happened, we then go onto give quotes of people who were involved in the incident in some way or who witnessed it.

In giving a quote, we need to **write the name of the person** who is speaking and also **tell the reader who they are**.

The quote is written between speech marks and is written in the present tense. An example of a quote is given below.

*Sally Smith, a member of Mr Harverson's class, remarked,*

*"Mr Harverson is very possessive of his wine gums; he's very guarded about them. The robbery must have come as a great shock to him."*

# Forward look

After we have given quotes of people who were involved in the incident in some way or who witnessed it, we finish the newspaper article, with a forward look.

This is written in the **present tense** as it says what is being done now concerning the incident.

An example of a forward look is given below.

*Police **are looking** for members of the public to provide any information they have about the robbery, including any suspicious behaviour seen in the area around the Greville Primary School on the night of the incident.*