**Article Writing**

**News Article, Editorial, Opinion Piece, Feature Article, Comment/Analysis**

[](http://www.google.ca/url?sa=i&rct=j&q=&source=images&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&docid=Vc3iP5cuw_7iIM&tbnid=kArG1BPgQTYFCM:&ved=0CAYQjRw&url=http://themichaelshowpodcast.com/category/podcast-2011/&ei=KnosU7iQFo_xqQH60oDICw&bvm=bv.62922401,d.aWc&psig=AFQjCNFpKPy8U9psOg6NxUdX-aujGXms7Q&ust=1395510001878404)

**Diane Philipatos, Académie Dunton and Annie Dumay, ESL Pedagogical Advisor, 2014 - CSDM**

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| **Comparison of Article Types** | **Foundation** | | **Proficiency** | | |
| **News Article** | **Editorial** | **Opinion Piece** | **Feature Article** | **Comment/Analysis** |
| **General Purpose** | To inform. | To influence or persuade. | To educate, provoke, influence, persuade, amuse or evoke feeling. | | |
| **Specific Purpose** | Provide reportage of an event or issue. | To influence readers to think or act in a certain way, in reaction to a current event or issue. | To influence readers, provoke thought or provoke controversy through an opinion. | To probe in some depth and explore ideas surrounding an event, issue or personality; to put the event or issue or personality into context; to give background. | To comment on, analyze, discuss and interpret an event, issue or personality. |
| **Perspective** | 3rd person | 3rd person (but may occasionally use 1st person when referring to society; i.e. “we” **but never “I”**.) | Usually 3rd person. | Mostly 3rd person but sometimes 1st person. | Usually 1st person but 3rd person is acceptable. |
| **Structure** | **Inverted pyramid**: the most important information leads, followed by details of increasing depth and decreasing importance. | Linear and logical: lead, development, close. | Circular (lead, development, close that links back to ideas in lead) or  Linear (lead, development, close). | | |
| **Development** | Develops according to the **decreasing** importance of detail and background. The reason is an editor can cut the story to fit any amount of space. | • In each paragraph, explain an argument/reason why you are for or against the issue.  • Include anecdotes, statistics and quotations from experts to support and lend credibility to your arguments.  • Your opinion should be clear, strong and persuasive. | • In each paragraph, explain an argument/reason why you are for or against the issue.  • Include anecdotes, statistics and quotations from experts to support and lend credibility to your arguments.  • Your opinion should be clear, strong and persuasive.  • Each paragraph represents a separate part of the story.  • Each part of the story must be explained before moving on to the next.  • Begin each paragraph with a description. Then, present an argument that you will back up with quotations from experts. | | • In each paragraph, explain an argument/reason why you are for or against the issue.  •Include anecdotes, statistics and quotations from experts to support and lend credibility to your arguments.  • Your opinion should be clear, strong and persuasive. |
| **Comparison of Article Types** | **Foundation** | | **Proficiency** | | |
| **News Article** | **Editorial** | **Opinion Piece** | **Feature** | **Comment/Analysis** |
| **Register and Language** | Formal, precise, lean (not loaded with adjectives and adverbs), past tense; active tense where possible. | Formal, flowing. | Can be formal or conversational according to topic, audience and purpose. | Generally past tense and formal, although it may use the present tense for impact, and have conversational aspects. | Can be formal or conversational according to topic, audience and purpose. |
| **Tone** | Serious. | Usually serious. | Ranges from light and humorous to serious and sombre. May include elements of sarcasm and satire. | | |
| **Subject** | Hard news: generally hard-hitting events and issues that affect people in some way: e.g. crime, corruption, accidents, politics, health, education, etc.  Soft news: human interest items: e.g. community events, personal stories. | Generally related to hard news; e.g. an editorial about road safety following a news article about a lake drowning; an editorial about the benefits of healthy eating after a news article announces fries and candy will be banned from school cafeterias. | An event, issue, person or cause that can be topical or universal – that is, relevant to and/or interesting to a lot of people, perhaps especially so at that particular time. It can be related to, but is not limited to, something already in the news.  E.g. There may be a “**Back to school**” topical feature article in late August, early September, but obviously not in March;  or a “**Why does everyone love Harry Potter so much**?” opinion column when the latest Harry Potter film is released but not a year later;  or a **“Milder winters are a double-edged sword**” analysis/commentary in January or February but not in July. | | |
| **Byline** | Yes. | No. (An editorial is attributed to “Staff” or the name of the publication, if at all). | Yes – often with a photo. | Yes – sometimes with a photo. | Yes – sometimes with a photo. |

**Codes and Conventions of a News Article, Editorial, Opinion Piece, Feature Article, Comment/Analysis**

**Headlines**

● Should be striking and attention-catching.

● Should use precise verbs – most often in the present tense, but may also be in the future or past tense.

● Should accurately reflect an, if not the most, important aspect of the article.

● May demonstrate humour and wit.

● May include the use of devices such as alliteration, metaphor, personification, etc.

**Byline**

● Attributes the work to a person e.g. By Elizabeth Wilson – usually at the beginning, between the headline and the lead.

**Lead (the opening sentence or sentences of an article)**

● Should engage the reader and focus him or her on the topic or a specific aspect of the topic.

● May be humorous, anecdotal, dramatic, emotional, abrupt, punchy, and/or creative.

**Structure**

● Varied, and can be described as **linear**, **circular**, or a “**beaded necklace**”. (Each paragraph is a bead and the author can experiment with patterns in ideas and language while linking the paragraphs together.)

● Involves a clear introduction, development and close. (*N.B. For clarity the word “conclusion” is* ***AVOIDED*** *here because articles do not end with the “In conclusion” phrase often found in essays.)*

● Often uses a close that refers cleverly or poignantly back to ideas in the lead or the headline.

**Development**

● The article should be broken down into several, even numerous, short paragraphs. For effect and/or clarity, some paragraphs may be only one sentence long.

● Should be clear and logical; whether cause-effect, problem-solution, comparison, chronological (related to time), spatial (related to location or place), or simply a logical, easy to follow train of thought. Sometimes, the lead will start with reference to a specific person; the development will put that person into a broader context, then expand with information from other sources and a discussion of implications; the close will return to the original person mentioned in the lead.

● Should lead the reader toward an enlightened understanding, a new perspective, and/or taking action.

**Language**

● Should be clear and crisp.

● Should demonstrate precision in vocabulary, particularly with verbs and nouns.

● Should show a strong voice.

● Often takes 3rd person perspective if the writer is not personally implicated in the subject.

● May take the 1st person perspective when the writer is personally implicated in the subject and if it adds value and interest; e.g. particularly in an opinion column.

● Should use a consistent tone – whether serious, humorous, authoritative, light, dark, dry, satirical, conversational, formal, philosophical or whimsical.

● May quote people’s spoken words as sources of information, or to add colour and human interest, especially in a feature article.

● Should demonstrate judicious and appropriate use of engaging devices such as puns, personification, alliteration, metaphor, onomatopoeia, etc.

● Should integrate a variety of sentence openers and sentence lengths.

● May demonstrate judicious and appropriate use of questions?, exclamations!, and ellipsis...for effect.

● Should aim to use active rather than passive voice.

● May be descriptive, sophisticated, and/or artistic (but not self-indulgent).

**Layout (optional during exams/mandatory for assignments)**

● Use of columns.

● Often includes graphics – photographs, graphs, maps, illustrations, etc. – for greater impact.

● May use a “drop cap” to start and also to signify shifts in topic during the article.

● Is often justified (meaning the text is aligned on the right and left margins of the columns; not ragged on the right hand side, nor centered).

● May use the occasional “pull quote” – a pertinent and dramatic sentence from the article duplicated in larger, bold font. This is a technique to draw readers in, as well as a way to break up the text.

*N.B.* ***For MELS exam purposes****, make sure headline and byline are clear and obvious.*

**Structure**

**Opinion Piece**

An **opinion piece** aims to persuade, influence, amuse and evoke feeling.

**Opinion piece** topics can range from light hearted topics to important news stories.

An **opinion piece** contains a strong and obvious argument that is properly reasoned and backed up by solid facts.

If an argument (reasoning) is challenged, it can be defended robustly.

It should be fair by acknowledging the existence of other arguments (reasoning) and viewpoints.

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| **PARTS** | **QUANTITY** | **CONTENT** |
| Headline | 1 sentence or phrase | • Define the main idea of the article (Who? What?)  • Grab the reader’s attention and interest.  • Write in an abbreviated form (incomplete sentences, strong simple present verbs, no articles).  • You may use humour or wit.  • You may use literary devices like metaphor, simile and alliteration. |
| Lead | 1 paragraph | • Light hearted topic: present topic in a witty/interesting manner.  You may use sarcasm, irony, humour.  • Serious news topic: present topic and its importance.  Provide all background information. |
| Body | 3 paragraphs | • In each paragraph, explain an argument/reason why you are for or against the issue.  • Include anecdotes, statistics and quotations from experts to support and lend credibility to your arguments.  • Your opinion should be clear, strong and persuasive.  • ELA students only: your opinion should be fair by acknowledging the existence of other arguments and viewpoints – concession. |
| Conclusion | 1 paragraph | • Give recommendations, prediction or forewarning about the possible impact of the issue.  • Use a strong final statement to convince your reader of your reasoning and logic about the issue. |

**Structure**

**Feature Article**

A **feature article** provides a slanted look.

Its aim is to educate, inform and persuade readers on a given topic in its context.

Opinion is demonstrated through choice of information/facts, not direct personal opinions.

It’s an objective presentation of facts but the choice of facts will guide the reader to understand your opinion.

Imagine that a **feature article** is a beaded necklace where each paragraph is a bead and the author can experiment with patterns in ideas and language while linking the paragraphs together.

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| **PARTS** | **QUANTITY** | **CONTENT** |
| Headline | 1 sentence or phrase | • Define the main idea of the article (Who? What?)  • Grab the reader’s attention and interest.  • Write in an abbreviated form (incomplete sentences, strong simple present  verbs, no articles)  • You may use humour or wit.  • You may use literary devices like metaphor, simile and alliteration.  • Your headline must demonstrate your angle. |
| Secondary Headline | 1 sentence or phrase | • Grab the reader’s attention and interest.  • You may use humour or wit.  • You may use literary devices like metaphor, simile and alliteration.  • Your secondary headline must demonstrate your controlling idea. |
| Lead | 1 paragraph | • Present topic by providing background information about the subject. |
| Body | 3 paragraphs | • Each paragraph represents a separate part of the story.  • Each part of the story must be explained before moving on to the next.  • Begin each paragraph with a description. Then, present an argument that you  will back up with quotations from experts. |
| Conclusion | 1 paragraph | • Give recommendations, prediction or forewarning about the possible impact of  the issue.  • Use a strong final statement to convince your reader of your reasoning and  logic about the issue. |

**Structure**

**Comment/Analysis Article**

A **comment/analysis** article provides a global analysis of a current event.

The issue/topic discussed **must** be a debatable and/or ethical issue.

The opinion is apparent in the title but not in the first paragraph.

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| **PARTS** | **QUANTITY** | **CONTENT** |
| Headline | 1 sentence or phrase | • Define the main idea of the article (Who? What?)  • Grab the reader’s attention and interest.  • Write in an abbreviated form (incomplete sentences, strong simple present verbs, no articles).  • You may use humour or wit.  • You may use literary devices like metaphor, simile and alliteration. |
| Lead | 1 or 2 paragraphs | • Introduce the conflict.  • Present a neutral summary of background information.  • Present both sides of the conflict.  • Paragraph 1: Who is put at risk in this situation/problem and why?  • Paragraph 2: Who benefits from this situation/problem and why?  • DO NOT INTRODUCE YOUR OPINION IN THE INTRODUCTION.  • Simply provide a clear explanation to inform the reader of this situation on both sides. |
| Context | 1 paragraph | • Put the conflict into a more global context.  • Why is this topic debatable/ethical?  • What impact or effect does this decision have on other groups, communities or society in  general that is not directly /immediately implicated in the problem?  • Introduce your opinion here. |
| Body | 3 paragraphs | • In each paragraph, explain an argument/reason why you are for or against the issue.  • Include anecdotes, statistics and quotations from experts to support and lend credibility to your  arguments.  • Your opinion should be clear, strong and persuasive. |
| Conclusion | 1 paragraph | • Give recommendations, prediction or forewarning about the possible impact of the issue.  • Use a strong final statement to convince your reader of your reasoning and logic about the  issue. |