

ANATOMY OF A NEWS STORY

1. Headline. Always write a headline, or a title, for your article. What are the headlines for the sample news stories? The headline should be *accurate, specific*, and NOT *editorialize*.

2. Dateline. Despite its name, a “dateline” includes the date and the location (city and state) of the news event. You will put both the date and place on the same line:

BURNSLEY, CA, March 19 —

3. The Lead. The lead (or “lede”) is the first paragraph of the news story. It is very important. It both (1) informs the reader what the story is about, and (2) entices the reader to continue reading. *Remember, you are not reporting on the competition. You are reporting on the trial as if it is a real event and as if the characters are real people.*

Tips for writing leads:

- It should answer the necessary who, what, why, where, when, or how, depending on what is the *most important* part of the story.
- Summarize what happened for the reader.
- Do not include too much detail. Only include the essentials.
- Use the names of public figures only (e.g., politicians, celebrities, news anchors, etc.).

4. Structure of the Story. Your story is “straight news.” It reports on an important event of the day. Straight news stories are not chronological like a “feature story” might be. Straight news follows a certain structure known as the *inverted pyramid*:

