Selective Writing Guide

HOW TO WRITE A NEWS REPORT

1. INTRODUCTION TO NEWS REPORT WRITING

News report writing is a crucial skill for presenting current events and information objectively and concisely. As a Year 6 student preparing for selective tests, understanding how to structure and write effective news reports will enhance your writing skills and ability to convey information clearly.

A news report is a factual account of a newsworthy event, typically published in newspapers, broadcast on television or radio, or shared online. Unlike feature articles or opinion pieces, news reports focus on delivering the most important facts about a recent event or situation, often following the "inverted pyramid" structure.

Key characteristics of news reports include:
– Objectivity: Presenting facts without bias
– Timeliness: Covering recent or ongoing events
– Clarity: Using clear, concise language
– Accuracy: Ensuring all information is correct and verified
– Relevance: Focusing on information that matters to the audience

2. STRUCTURE OF A NEWS REPORT

A well-structured news report typically includes the following elements:

BREAKING NEWS

a) Headline:

A concise, attention-grabbing title that summarises the main point of the story.

Examples:

1. "Local Hero Rescues Family from Burning Building"
2. "Breakthrough Discovery Could Reverse Climate Change"
3. "City Council Approves Controversial Skyscraper Project"
4. "Record-Breaking Heatwave Grips Nation"
5. "Tech Giant Unveils Revolutionary AI Assistant"

b) By-line:

The reporter's name (if applicable).

Examples:

1. By Sarah Johnson
2. Report by Michael Chang
3. Special Correspondent Emma Watson
4. Investigation by Team ABC News
5. From our Science Desk: Dr. Alex Lee

2. STRUCTURE OF A NEWS REPORT

c) Lead (or Lede):

The opening paragraph that answers the key questions: Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?

Examples:

1. "In a daring rescue that onlookers are calling 'miraculous', off-duty firefighter Jake Martinez saved a family of five from their burning home on Elm Street last night, risking his own life to battle through flames and thick smoke."

2. "Scientists at the Global Climate Institute have announced a ground-breaking method to remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere at unprecedented rates, potentially offering a lifeline in the fight against climate change."

3. "The Millbrook City Council voted 7-2 last night to approve the construction of a controversial 80-story skyscraper in the historic downtown area, despite fierce opposition from local preservation groups and residents."

4. "A relentless heatwave continues to scorch the nation for the tenth consecutive day, with temperatures soaring past 40°C (104°F) in major cities, prompting health warnings and straining power grids to their limits."

5. "Tech giant InnovateCorp unveiled its highly anticipated AI assistant 'Nexus' yesterday, promising to revolutionise how we interact with technology in our daily lives. The announcement sent shockwaves through the tech industry and saw InnovateCorp's stock price surge by 15%."

2. STRUCTURE OF A NEWS REPORT

d) Body: Additional details that support and expand on the information in the lead, presented in order of descending importance.

e) Background: Context or historical information that helps readers understand the significance of the event.

f) Conclusion: A wrap-up of the story, often including future implications or next steps.

g) Quotes:

Direct statements from relevant sources or witnesses to add credibility and perspective to the story.

Examples:

1. "'I just did what anyone would do,' Martinez said, his voice hoarse from smoke inhalation. 'When I heard those kids screaming, I knew I had to act fast.'"

2. "Dr. Emily Zhao, lead researcher on the project, explained: 'This technology has the potential to remove gigatons of CO2 from the atmosphere annually. It's not a silver bullet, but it could buy us crucial time in our fight against climate change.'"

3. "'This decision is a travesty,' declared Maria Sanchez, head of the Millbrook Historical Society. 'It's a slap in the face to our city's rich architectural heritage.'"

4. "Health Minister Dr. James Wong warned, 'This heatwave is not just uncomfortable, it's dangerous. We're urging everyone, especially the elderly and young children, to stay indoors and stay hydrated.'"

3. STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO WRITING A NEWS REPORT

Step 1:

Gather information

- Conduct interviews with relevant people
- Collect facts, figures, and background information
- Verify all information from reliable sources

Step 2:

Organise your information

- Determine the most important facts (for your lead)
- Arrange remaining information in order of importance

Step 3:

Write a compelling headline

- Summarise the main point of the story
- Use active verbs and vivid language

Step 4:

Craft your lead

- Answer the 5 W's and H (Who, What, When, Where, Why, How)
- Make it engaging to hook the reader

3. STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO WRITING A NEWS REPORT

Step 5:

Develop the body

– Expand on the information in the lead

– Include quotes from sources

– Provide context and background information

Step 6:

Add a conclusion

– Summarise any unresolved aspects of the story

– Mention potential future developments

Step 7:

Review and edit

– Check for accuracy, clarity, and conciseness

– Ensure the story flows logically

– Proofread for grammar and spelling errors

4. VOCABULARY FOR NEWS REPORT WRITING

1. Alleged – claimed but not proven
2. Annex – to attach, append, or add, especially to something larger or more important
3. Cite – to mention in support, proof, or confirmation; refer to as an example
4. Clout – influence or power, especially in politics or business
5. Convene – to come together or assemble, usually for a public purpose
6. Corroborate – to make more certain; confirm
7. Disseminate – to spread or disperse something, especially information widely
8. Embargo – an official ban on trade or other commercial activity with a particular country
9. Enact – to make into law
10. Exacerbate – to increase the severity, bitterness, or violence of; aggravate
11. Fledgling – young, inexperienced, or underdeveloped
12. Impartial – not partial or biassed; fair; just

4. VOCABULARY FOR NEWS REPORT WRITING

13. Influx – an arrival or entry of large numbers of people or things

14. Liaise – to form a liaison, especially to communicate and maintain contact

15. Mitigate – to make less severe, serious, or painful

16. Moot – subject to debate, dispute, or uncertainty

17. Moratorium – a temporary prohibition of an activity

18. Proliferate – to increase rapidly in numbers; multiply

19. Reiterate – to say something again or a number of times, typically for emphasis or clarity

20. Sanction – a threatened penalty for disobeying a law or rule

21. Stagnate – to cease to flow or move; become stagnant

22. Substantiate – provide evidence to support or prove the truth of

23. Tumult – confusion or disorder

24. Ubiquitous – present, appearing, or found everywhere

25. Vilify – speak or write about in an abusively disparaging manner

26. Whistleblower – a person who informs on a person or organisation engaged in an illicit activity
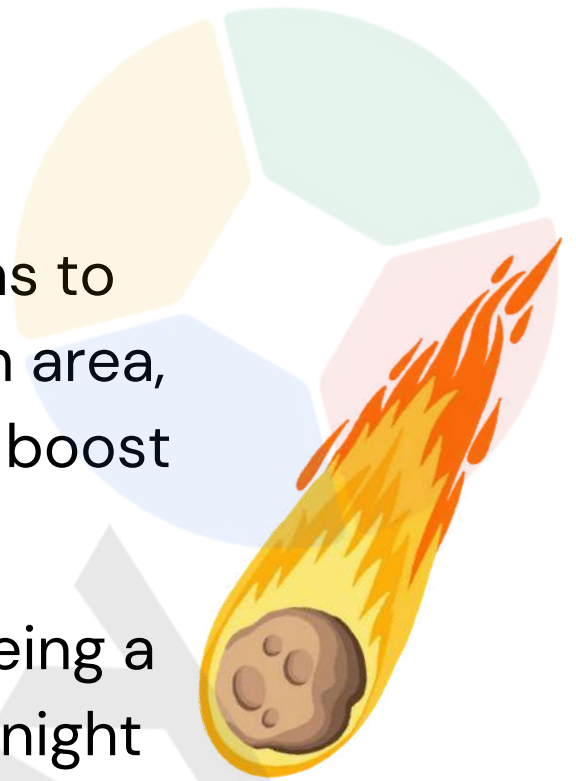
5. EXAMPLE SENTENCES

1. "The mayor announced plans to revitalise the city's downtown area, promising to create jobs and boost local businesses."

2. "Eyewitnesses reported seeing a bright light streak across the night sky, prompting speculation about a possible meteor sighting."

3. "The school board voted unanimously to implement a new anti-bullying program, set to launch next semester."

4. "Scientists have discovered a new species of deep-sea creature, shedding light on the biodiversity of our oceans."

5. "The national football team secured a dramatic last-minute victory, advancing to the World Cup finals for the first time in 20 years."
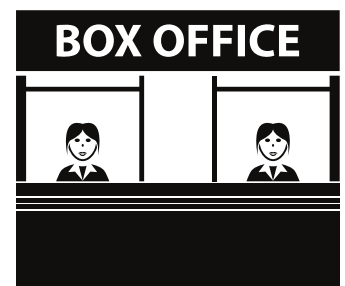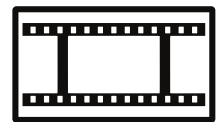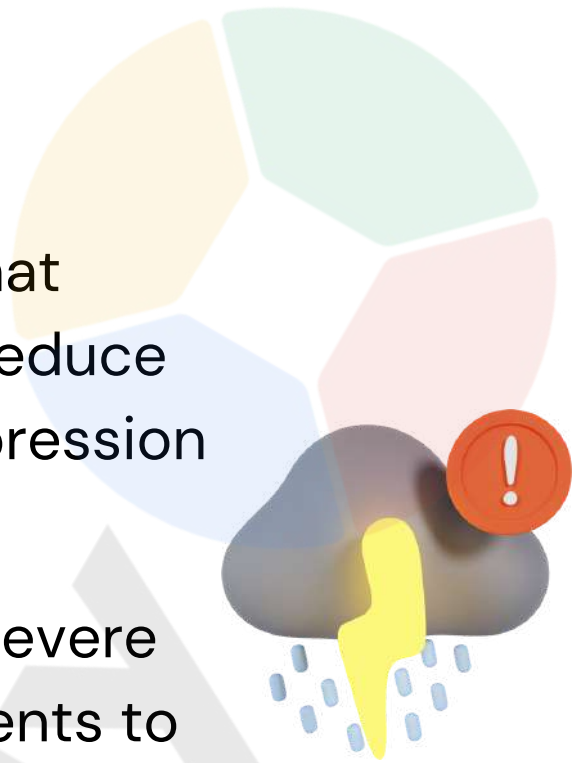
5. EXAMPLE SENTENCES

6. "A recent study suggests that regular meditation may help reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression in teenagers."

7. "Local authorities issued a severe weather warning, urging residents to prepare for potential flooding in low-lying areas."

8. "The long-awaited sequel to the blockbuster movie broke box office records, earning $200 million in its opening weekend."

9. "A malfunction at the city's water treatment plant has led to a boil water advisory for all residents until further notice."

10. "The tech company's latest smartphone model features a revolutionary foldable screen, setting a new standard in mobile device design."

6. FULL EXEMPLAR NEWS REPORT

Headline: Local School's Innovative Recycling Program Cuts Waste by 50%

By Jane Smith

GREENVILLE, May 15, 2024 - Greenville Central School has made headlines this week with the remarkable success of its new recycling initiative, which has slashed the school's waste output by half in just three months. The program, spearheaded by the school's Environmental Club, has not only significantly reduced the amount of waste sent to landfills but has also inspired a wave of environmental consciousness among students and staff.

The initiative, launched in February, introduced color-coded recycling bins throughout the school and implemented a comprehensive education program on proper waste sorting. "We wanted to make recycling not just easy, but exciting," explains Sarah Johnson, 12, president of the Environmental Club. "So we turned it into a fun competition between classes."

The results have been nothing short of impressive. According to data provided by the school administration, the amount of waste sent to landfills has decreased from an average of 500 kg per week to just 250 kg. Meanwhile, the volume of recyclables collected has more than doubled.

Principal Robert Thompson expressed his pride in the students' efforts. "What these young people have achieved is truly remarkable," he said. "They've not only made a tangible difference to our school's environmental footprint, but they've also demonstrated incredible leadership and initiative."

6. FULL EXEMPLAR NEWS REPORT

The success of the program has caught the attention of other schools in the district. Greenville Central School will be hosting a workshop next month to share their strategies with representatives from ten other local schools.

Local environmental groups have also taken notice. "This is exactly the kind of grassroots action we need to see more of," said Emma Roberts, director of Greenville Environmental Action. "These students are setting an example for the whole community."

The impact of the recycling program extends beyond the school gates. Many students report that they've started implementing similar practices at home. "I've been teaching my parents and siblings about proper recycling," says Michael Lee, a Year 6 student. "It feels good to know we're making a difference."

The Environmental Club isn't resting on its laurels. They're already planning the next phase of their green initiative, which includes a composting program and a campaign to reduce single-use plastics in the school cafeteria.

As the global climate crisis continues to make headlines, the success of Greenville Central School's recycling program offers a beacon of hope. It serves as a powerful reminder that small, local actions can lead to significant change, and that even the youngest members of our community can be powerful agents of environmental stewardship.

7. TASKS, EXERCISES, AND ACTIVITIES

1. Headline Creation Workshop:
Using the main facts from stories like 'New Park Opening Downtown', 'Local School Wins Technology Grant', and 'City Council Election Results', craft attention-grabbing headlines that convey the essence and urgency of each news story.

2. Lead Paragraph Development:
Write lead paragraphs for news events such as 'Annual Charity Marathon', 'State Educational Reform', and 'Emergency Weather Response'. Ensure each lead answers the 5 W's (Who, What, When, Where, Why) and H (How).

3. Interview Simulation:
Pair up and role-play as a journalist and a witness to a recent event like 'Opening of a New Library' or 'High School Sports Championship'. The 'reporter' should prepare questions, conduct the interview, and write a concise news report based on the discussion.

4. Fact vs. Opinion Exercise:
Analyse statements related to a news story, such as 'Community Reaction to New Traffic Laws'. Distinguish between factual statements and opinions, and discuss the importance of attributing opinions to specific sources in news reports.

5. News Story Structure Task:
Reorganise a mixed-up article about events like 'Tech Startup Launches New App' or 'Local Museum Unveils New Exhibit'. Apply the inverted pyramid structure to prioritise information from most to least important.

7. TASKS, EXERCISES, AND ACTIVITIES

6. Source Quotation Practice:
Select and integrate quotes effectively into a news report covering 'Teacher Strikes' or 'Healthcare Funding Changes'. Choose quotes that enhance the narrative and provide credibility.

7. Breaking News Simulation:
Engage in a classroom simulation of a breaking news event, such as 'Local Factory Fire' or 'Sudden Political Resignation'. Gather facts, conduct rapid interviews, and produce a timely news report under deadline pressure.

8. Local News Hunt:
Investigate and report on a newsworthy event within the school or community, like 'New Art Installation in the Park' or 'Changes to Local Bus Routes'. Write a news report detailing your findings.

9. News Report Analysis:
Examine a professional news report on a topic like 'State Governor's Visit' or 'New Wildlife Conservation Efforts'. Identify and label different structural elements, including the headline, lead, body, and quotes.

10. Peer Editing Workshop:
Swap draft news reports on topics such as 'School's New Recycling Program' or 'Local Business Expansion'. Use a structured checklist to critique each other's work, focusing on adherence to news reporting standards, structural integrity, and clarity of information.