
Unit 4 - Feature Writing

Unit Overview:

Feature stories add color to the newspaper. They are the story behind the story, the heart and soul of the publication. They add warmth to cold, hard facts. This unit introduces the feature story.

Lesson 4.1 Day 1

Objective(s)

- TLW recognize the differences between a news and feature story.
- TLW become familiar with the types of feature stories, structure of the feature story and where feature story ideas are found

Topics:

Feature writing, human interest, colorful writing, action verbs

Procedure:

- Have students read Resource 4.1, the Feature Example.
- Discuss how it differs from a news story.
 - Not in inverted pyramid form
 - Focuses more on the people or behind-the-scenes action or has an unusual angle
 - The human interest news element is prominent
 - The lead is more creative.
- View PowerPoint 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 or CN 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3. These presentations will give students information on types of features, the structure of the feature story (still follows the L-Q-T-Q-T-Q structure), and where to find feature story ideas.
- No written activity is scheduled for today, but if you have extra time, let the students do a journaling or copyediting activity.
- Students will continue with feature writing on the next class day with a look at the various types of feature leads.

Description:

Readers love to read about other people—what they do, what they say, what they are thinking about. They love to read about the behind-the-scenes information that goes on with big events. They like to read about the movers and shakers that make things happen, the people who discover medical or scientific breakthroughs, the student who overcomes incredible odds to be valedictorian.

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Everyone has a story to tell that has the potential to be a feature story.

Feature stories are stories about people and what they do. They can be in a variety of forms and can be any length, from the very brief featurette to the magazine-length, in-depth feature. They are written much more creatively than news stories because they are not locked into a particular structure. However, as important as quotes are to news stories to give them credibility, quotes are even more essential to feature stories. Quotes give them not only credibility, but color and life. The quotes tell the story; the reporter's words in the lead, transitions, and, sometimes, the conclusion tie it all together.

Features can be informative or entertaining or both.

Assessment:

N/A

Homework:

Read Unit 4 section on feature leads.

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Lesson 4.2: Day 2

Objective(s):

- TLW recognize, understand and write various types of feature leads which will attract the attention of the reader and provide an interesting entrance into the story.

Topic:

Feature leads

Procedure:

- The feature lead will be the focus of today's activities.
- The purpose of the feature lead is to draw the reader's attention and hold it so that the reader will want to continue reading. Unlike the summary lead, it does not give the reader a capsulated version of the story; instead, it may tease the reader before guiding him or her into the story.
- View PowerPoint 4.4 or CN 4.4.
- Students will do Activity 4.1, Analyzing Feature Leads.
- Students will analyze 5 feature leads to determine the type, whether or not there is a news peg (relationship to a news event) and how the lead suits the tone of the story.

Materials List:

- Classroom set of community newspapers or stories selected and duplicated for student use
- Activity 4.1

Description:

Just like summary leads, feature or novelty leads are the introduction to the story. But unlike summary leads, the focus is not on the 5 Ws and H. The focus is on whatever the reporter feels will draw readers into the story and make them want to read every word.

The lead is vitally important to the story. If the lead does not grab the attention of the reader and hold it, the reader will not continue to read no matter how well the body or conclusion is written. The reporter must entice the reader through the lead.

The best lead for a feature story is one that sounds natural, grabs the readers' attention and matches the mood and tone of the story.

Assessment:

Grade activity

Homework:

N/A

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Lesson 4-3: Day 3

Objective(s):

- TLW write feature leads from facts given by the instructor

Topic:

Feature lead writing

Procedure:

- Briefly go over different types of feature writing.
- Students will do Activity 4.2, Writing Feature Leads
- There are only three leads, but feature leads are more complicated and creative than summary leads. Students may not finish during class, so let them finish these for homework and turn in during the next class period.
- Feature lead writing is an important skill and students will need feedback and suggestions for improvement while the leads are still fresh on their minds.

Materials Needed:

Activity 4.2

Description:

See previous day's description

Assessment:

Grade leads

Homework:

Read Unit 4 section on Feature Leads, Bodies and Conclusions

Lesson 4-4: Day 4

Note: *To give the instructor opportunity to collect and go over leads before the next class period, a current events activity day is included here.*