



## General News Writing

This contest focuses on the **written** version of the news story produced for broadcast. Students must craft a clear, well-organized news script that meets journalistic standards and can be used in a broadcast format. The written news story should cover a relevant and timely event with all the essential information presented in a concise and structured way.

### Key Elements of General News Writing:

#### 1. Newsworthiness and Relevance:

- The story should address a current event or issue that holds importance to the school or broader community. The news should be recent and significant, focusing on events, issues, or developments that are relevant to the audience. Examples could include breaking news, school events, achievements, or public interest stories.

#### 2. Inverted Pyramid Structure:

- The **inverted pyramid** is a common news writing structure where the most crucial information is provided first, followed by supporting details in descending order of importance.
  - **Lead:** The lead sentence should summarize the story's main point (who, what, when, where, why, and how) in one or two sentences, grabbing the viewer's attention immediately.
  - **Body:** The body of the news story expands on the details, providing context, facts, and additional quotes or interviews that further explain the event.
  - **Conclusion:** The conclusion wraps up the story, often with a forward-looking statement, such as what might happen next or the broader impact of the event.

#### 3. Clarity and Conciseness:

- Broadcast news writing needs to be **simple, clear, and concise**, as the script is read aloud for viewers to follow easily. Sentences should be short, active, and to the point. Avoid overly complex language or jargon that might confuse the audience.
- Example: "The Bellville High School robotics team won first place at the regional competition yesterday, earning a spot in the state finals next month."

#### 4. Attribution and Accuracy:

- All quotes and information must be attributed to their sources, ensuring **credibility** and **accuracy**. This could include quotes from interviews, facts from official reports, or statements from event organizers.
- Example: "According to Coach Miller, 'This win is a huge accomplishment for our students, and they've worked incredibly hard for it.'"
- Ensure that every fact in the story is accurate, as any mistakes could lead to a loss of trust with the audience.

#### 5. Quotes and Sound Bites:



- The written news story should include **sound bites** or quotes from key individuals that add depth to the story. These quotes should be integrated smoothly into the script and used to provide insight or support the narrative.
- **Placement of Quotes:** Place impactful quotes at strategic points to enhance the story, such as immediately following key pieces of information or when adding personal insight from someone involved in the event.
- Example: After summarizing a school event, include a relevant quote from a participant: "Sophomore Emily Johnson said, 'The competition was tough, but we're proud to bring home the trophy.'"
- 6. **Logical Flow and Transitions:**
  - A well-written news story should **flow logically** from one point to the next. Transitions between ideas or sections of the story should be smooth and natural, helping the audience follow along without confusion.
  - Example: "After the announcement of the winner, the crowd erupted in applause, and students gathered to celebrate with their coaches."
- 7. **Adapting for Broadcast:**
  - Writing for broadcast is different from print. The script should be written to be read **aloud**, meaning it needs to sound natural and easy to follow. Use conversational language that a news anchor would be comfortable speaking.
  - Example: Instead of writing, "The robotics competition was attended by over 500 people, including students, parents, and local businesses," a broadcast version might say, "Over 500 people, including students, parents, and local business owners, came to watch the robotics competition."
- 8. **Length and Time Constraints:**
  - The written story must fit within the time limit of the broadcast, typically less than 4 minutes. This means keeping the word count manageable while still covering all necessary details. Every word should contribute to the story; avoid unnecessary repetition or filler content.
  - **Timing the Script:** Practice reading the script aloud at a natural pace to ensure it fits within the designated time.
- 9. **Strong Ending:**
  - The ending should bring the story to a close while leaving a lasting impression. Often, this will be a look toward the future or a summary of the broader implications of the event.
  - Example: "The team will head to the state competition next month, aiming to build on their success."
- 10. **Technical Considerations:**
  - The written story should include **instructions for the anchor** or reporter who will be reading it. This includes noting pauses for emphasis, indicating where sound bites should be inserted, or specifying any relevant visual elements (e.g., b-roll or graphics).
  - Example: "(Pause) Now, let's hear from one of the winning team members, Emily Johnson (Insert sound bite: Johnson quote)."

### Criteria for Judging:



- **Clarity and Conciseness:** How clearly the story is written and whether it conveys the necessary information in a concise manner.
- **Journalistic Quality:** Accuracy, newsworthiness, and proper use of quotes and attribution.
- **Story Flow:** The logical structure and flow of the story.
- **Broadcast Adaptability:** Whether the story is written in a way that can be easily delivered by a news anchor or reporter.
- **Time Management:** The ability to fit the story within the 4-minute broadcast limit without losing essential details.

In summary, the **General News Writing** contest challenges students to create a written news script that is clear, accurate, and engaging for a broadcast audience. It requires a balance of journalistic skill, concise writing, and a keen understanding of how to adapt content for a live news setting.