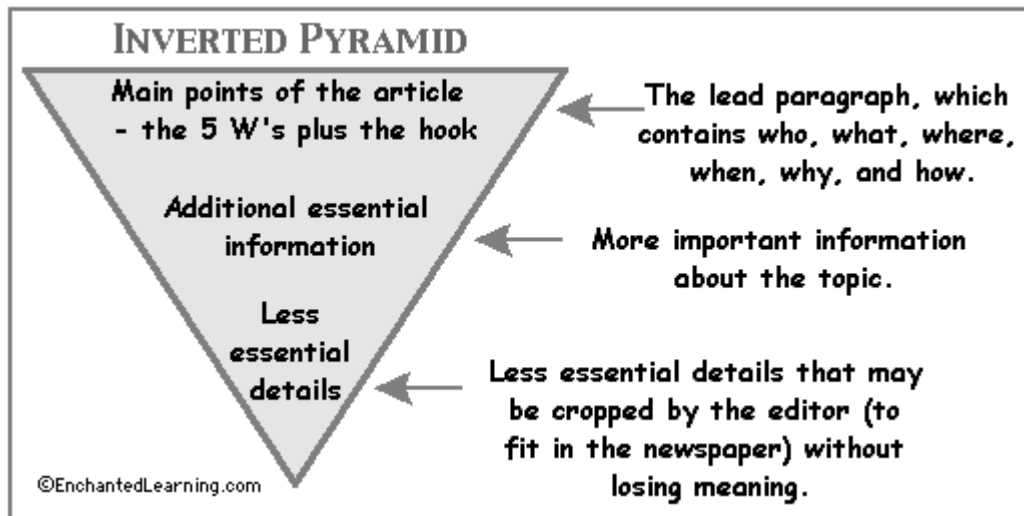


WRITING ON CURRENT NEWS TOPICS

Source: enhancedlearning & yourdictionary



Structure of a Newspaper Article

Each newspaper article has a title (called the **headline**) that is set in large type. The writer of a newspaper article is often not credited; if the author is mentioned, this credit is called the author's **byline**. The beginning of each newspaper article (the first paragraph) is called the **lead** (one or two sentences long); the lead should summarize the main facts of the article, telling the 5 W's (who, what, when, where, and why) and how. The first paragraph should also contain a **hook**, something that grabs the reader's attention and makes the reader read the rest of the article. The **nut graph** is the paragraph that contains the core information about the story and tells the reader why the story is important.

Balancing Facts and Style

Readers need to know the facts and who or what may be affected by them. Related stories and background information make up the context and the emotional parts of the story show the human side of it.

Following are the tips on writing a compelling and gripping news report.

- **Facts:** The facts will answer the: who, what, when, where, why, and how of the news event. A writer has a responsibility to make sure his facts are accurate. If you have to write a report before you get all the facts, then say that in the report.
- **Style:** When writing a news report, use the active voice. The active voice is more understandable and has more impact. Make short, concise sentences with action verbs. Your language needs to be simple and not have extra words that don't really contribute to the focus of the story. For example, the weather or how someone is dressed doesn't need to be included unless it has a bearing on the overall story. While you are writing, try to anticipate any questions a reader might have while reading your story.

Writing a Good Lead

The lead is the first few sentences of the story. It needs to be strong so it will grab the readers and make them want to read more.

- If it is a hard news story, which is the breaking news or up-to-the-minute news, then you include as many facts as you can in the summary of the story.
- If it is a soft news story, which is a human interest story or background information, then you put the facts in the body of the story.

Leads need to tell the reader what the story is about and why it is important. The lead tells the reader why he/she should read the story. It needs to sound like you are having a conversation; that you are telling a friend about the latest news.

Some errors that are found in leads include the lead having more than one main idea. When this happens, the reader is unclear as to what the story is about.

- Some leads are lifeless, and need some tension or something that pushes the reader to read on, like dangling a carrot in front of a hungry rabbit.
- Leads are sometimes dull and predictable. It's good to make the reader smile or be surprised sometimes.

Lastly, leads can exclude certain readers if they are full of jargon. Make sure the news report is suitable for everyone to read.

Tips for Better Writing

Here are a few additional tips for writing that apply to writing in general:

- Words should not be too long or complicated. A news story is not the place to try and impress people with your intelligence or your command of the English language. Pick your words carefully so they are concise and you will use fewer words overall.
- Make sure your sentences are under 25 words and contain only one idea.
- Use a simple subject verb object form.
- Don't use too many commas.
- Paragraphs need to say something new and, like sentences, be short and to the point.
- Never put more than three prepositional phrases into one sentence.
- Never put more than three numbers in one sentence.

These will help your writing be clearer and easier to understand.

RESPONDING TO NEWS ARTICLES

Source: <http://www.ucsusa.org/>

1. **Respond to an article in the paper.** The best letters are those that are in response to an article that ran in the paper and many papers require that you reference the specific article. Your letter will have a greater chance of being printed if it is in response to an editorial, op-ed, or front page story. Begin your letter by citing the original story by name, date, and author. Some papers do occasionally print Letters to the Editor (LTEs) noting a lack of coverage on a specific issue. If this is the topic you are writing about, begin by stating your concern that the paper hasn't focused on this important issue.
2. **Follow the paper's directions.** Information on how and to whom to submit a letter-to-the-editor is usually found right on the letters page in your paper. This often includes guidelines on what the paper looks for in LTEs. Follow these guidelines to increase the likelihood that your letter will be printed. If you can't find the information you need, simply call the paper and ask how to go about submitting a letter in response to a recently published article.
3. **Be timely.** Respond to an article within two or three days of its publication.
4. **Share your expertise.** If you have relevant qualifications to the topic you're addressing be sure to include that in your letter. If you are a doctor writing about a health issue, a Prius owner writing about hybrid cars, or you are writing about energy issues and you have solar panels on your roof—share that information up front.
5. **Keep your letter short, focused, and interesting.** In general, letters should be under 200 words, 150 or less is best; stay focused on one (or, at the most, two) main point(s); and get to the main point in the first two sentences. If possible include interesting facts, relevant personal experience, and any local connections to the issue. If your letter is longer than 200 words, it will likely be edited or not printed.
6. **Write the letter in your own words.** Editors want letters in their papers to be original and from a reader. Be sure that you take the time to write the letter in your own words.
7. **Refute, advocate, and make a call to action.** Most letters to the editor follow a standard format. Open your letter by refuting the claim made in the original story the paper ran. Then use the next few sentences to back up your claims and advocate for your position. Try to focus on the positive. For example: *According to the Union of Concerned Scientists, investments in renewable energy would bring over \$200 million to our state and create 36,000 jobs by 2020.* Then wrap your letter up by explaining what you think needs to happen now, make your call to action.
8. **Include your contact information.** Be sure to include your name, address, and daytime phone number; the paper will contact you before printing your letter.

Genre

The film review is a popular way for critics to assess a film's overall quality and determine whether or not they think the film is worth recommending. Film reviews differ from scholarly film articles in that they encompass personal and idiosyncratic reactions to and evaluations of a film, as well as objective analyses of the film's formal techniques and thematic content.

Preparing to Write the Review

While film reviews tend to be fairly short (approximately 600 to 1200 words), they require a lot of preparation before you begin writing. Prior to viewing the film, you may want to get a sense of the bodies of work by the director, writer, or individual actor. For instance, you may watch other films by the same director or writer in order to get a sense of each individual style. This will enable you to contextualize the film and determine whether it works as a continuation and/or disruption within the broad trends of the director's or writer's work.

Writing a film review often requires multiple viewings of the film. Plan to watch the film two or even three times. During the first viewing, surrender yourself to the cinematic experience; in other words, get lost in the narrative and enjoy the film without worrying about the argument you will eventually cultivate. During your second viewing, try distancing yourself from the plot and instead focus on interesting elements of the film that you can highlight in the review. You may separate these elements into two broad categories: 1) *formal techniques* such as cinematography, editing, mise-en-scene, lighting, diegetic and non-diegetic sound, genre, or narratology, and 2) *thematic content* that resonate with issues such as history, race, gender, sexuality, class, or the environment.

After watching the film a second time, take careful notes on the formal and thematic elements of the film. Then attempt to create a central idea for your review that brings together the film's formal and thematic elements. If your second viewing does not yield a strong central claim for the review or if you need to take more notes, you may have to watch the film or parts of the film a third time.

Writing the Film Review

Although there is not a set formula to follow when writing a film review, the genre does have certain common elements that most film reviews include.

1) Introduction

- In the opening of your review, provide some basic information about the film. You may include film's name, year, director, screenwriter, and major actors. Your introduction, which may be longer than one paragraph, should also begin to evaluate the film, and it should allude to the central concept of the review. A film review does not have to contain a thesis or main claim, but it should focus on a central analysis and assessment.

2) Plot Summary

Remember that many readers of film reviews have not yet seen the film. While you want to provide some plot summary, keep this brief and avoid specific details that would spoil the viewing for others.

3) Description

While the plot summary will give the reader a general sense of what the film is about, also include a more detailed description of your particular cinematic experience watching the film. This may include your personal impression of what the film looks, feels, and sounds like. In other words, what stands out in your mind when you think about this particular film?

4) Analysis

In order to explain your impression of the film, consider how well the film utilizes formal techniques and thematic content. How do the film's formal techniques (such as cinematography, editing, mise-en-scène, lighting, diegetic and non-diegetic sound, genre, or narrative) affect the way the film looks, feels, and sounds to you? How does the thematic content (such as history, race, gender, sexuality, class, or the environment) affect your experience and interpretation? Also, do the formal techniques work to forward the thematic content?

5) Conclusion/Evaluation

- The closing of your film review should remind the reader of your general thoughts and impressions of the film. You may also implicitly or explicitly state whether or not you recommend the film. Make sure to remind the reader of why the film is or is not worth seeing.

MIND MAPPING

Source: Writing Centre, The University of Adelaide

What is mind mapping?

Mind mapping was developed as an effective method for generating ideas by association. In order to create a mind map, you usually start in the middle of the page with the central theme/main idea and from that point you work outward in all directions to create a growing diagram composed of keywords, phrases, concepts, facts and figures.

It can be used for assignments and essay writing especially in the initial stages, where it is an ideal strategy to use for your 'thinking'. Mind mapping can be used for generating, visualising, organising, note-taking, problem-solving, decision-making, revising and clarifying your university topic, so that you can get started with assessment tasks. Essentially, a mind map is used to 'brainstorm' a topic and is a great strategy for students.

How do I use mind mapping?

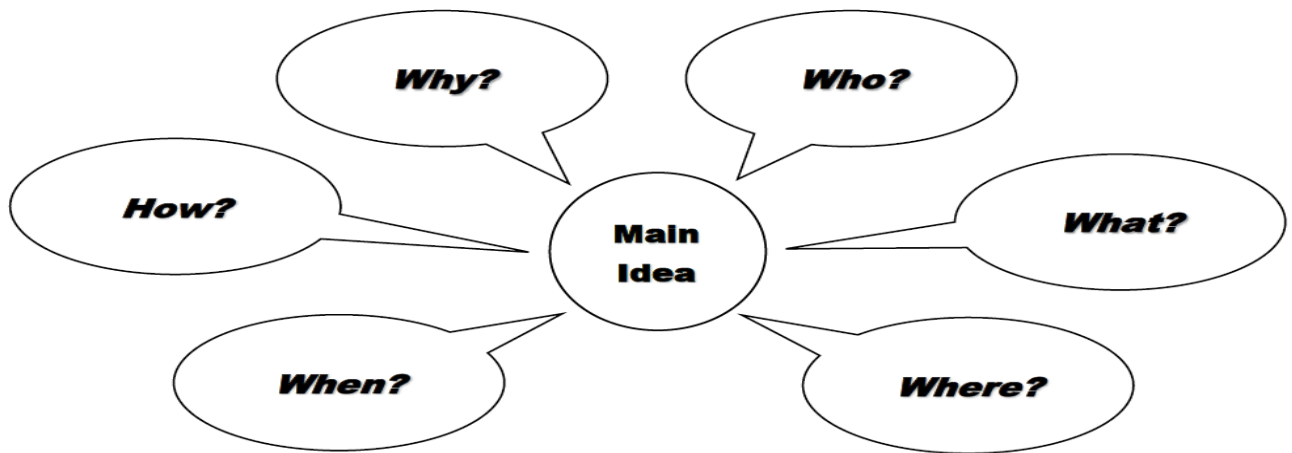
You can use mind mapping for the following:

- taking notes in a lecture and listening for the most important points or keywords
- showing links and relationships between the main ideas in your subject
- brainstorming all the things you already know about an essay question
- planning the early stages of an essay by visualising all the aspects of the question
- organising your ideas and information by making it accessible on a single page
- stimulating creative thinking and creative solutions to problems
- reviewing learning in preparation for a test or examination.

How do I get started with mind mapping?

1. Place the central theme/main idea or controlling point in the centre of your page. You may find it easier to place your page on the side, in landscape orientation, which is easier for drawing purposes.
2. Use lines, arrows, speech bubbles, branches and different colours as ways of showing the connection between the central theme/main idea and your ideas which stem from that focus. The relationships are important, as they may form your essay paragraphs
3. Avoid creating an artistic masterpiece. You should draw quickly without major pauses or editing. Chances are, your first idea was fine and you placed that idea in the direction or on the branch you thought made the most sense. It is important in the initial stages of mind mapping to consider every possibility, even those you may not use.
4. Choose different colours to symbolise different things e.g. you may choose blue for something you must incorporate in your paper, black for other good ideas, and red for the things you need to research or check with your tutor/lecturer. Your method is entirely up to you, but try to remain consistent so that you can better reflect on your mind map at a later stage.
5. Leave some space on your page. The reason for this is that you can continue to add to your diagram over a period of time. If A4 sized paper feels too small, you may like to use A3.

The following mind map is a basic model with which you can get started on a research topic:



RADIAL TREE

A **radial tree**, or **radial map**, is a method of displaying a tree structure (e.g., a tree data structure) in a way that expands outwards, radially. It is one of many ways to visually display a tree, with examples extending back to the early 20th century. In use, it is a type of information graphic.

In a simple case, the first node is at the top, and the linked nodes are beneath. As each node typically has more than one child, the resulting shape is relatively triangular. In a radial layout, instead of each successive generation being displayed a row below, each generation is displayed in a new, outer orbit.

Since the length of each orbit increases with the radius, there tends to be more room for the nodes. A radial tree will spread the larger number of nodes over a larger area as the levels increase. We use the terms level and depth interchangeably. Nevertheless, the number of nodes increases exponentially with the distance from the first node, whereas the circumference of each orbit increases linearly, so by the outer orbits, the nodes tend to be packed together.

The overall distance "d" is the distance between levels of the graph. It is chosen so that the overall layout will fit within a screen. Layouts are generated by working outward from the center, root. The first level is a special case because all the nodes have the same parent. The nodes for level 1 can be distributed evenly, or weighted depending on the number of children they have. For subsequent levels, the children are positioned within sectors of the remaining space, so that child nodes of one parent do not overlap with others.

There are a many extensions to this algorithm to create more visually balanced layouts, to allow a user to navigate from node to node (changing the center), or accommodate node labels and mix force-directed layouts with radial layouts.

The layout has some similarities to a hyperbolic tree, though a key difference is that hyperbolic trees are based on hyperbolic geometry, whereas in a radial tree the distance between orbits is relatively linear.

CONCEPT MAP

A concept map or conceptual diagram is a diagram that depicts suggested relationships between concepts. It is a graphical tool that instructional designers, engineers, technical writers, and others use to organize and structure knowledge.

A concept map typically represents ideas and information as boxes or circles, which it connects with labelled arrows in a downward-branching hierarchical structure. The relationship between concepts can be articulated in linking phrases such as causes, requires, or contributes to.

The technique for visualizing these relationships among different concepts is called concept mapping.

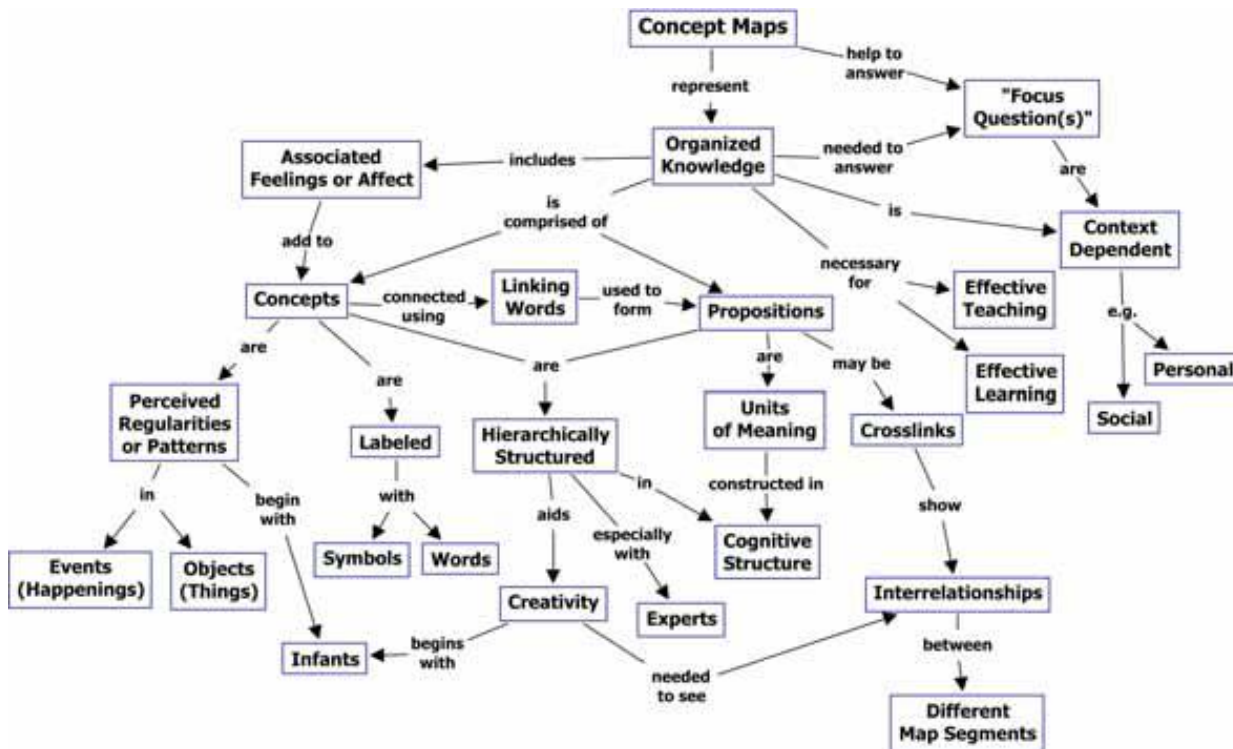


Figure. A concept map showing the key features of concept maps. Concept maps tend to be read progressing from the top downward.

A book review describes, analyzes and evaluates. The review conveys an opinion, supporting it with evidence from the book.

Before reading, consider:

- Title - What does it suggest?
- Preface or Introduction - Provides important information about the author's intentions or the scope of the book. Can you identify any limitations? Has the author ignored important aspects of the subject?
- Table of Contents - Shows how the book's organized -- main ideas, how they're developed (chronologically, topically, etc.)

Points to ponder as you read the *entire* book:

- What's the general field or genre? Does the book fit?
- From what point of view is the book written?
- Do you agree or disagree with the author's point of view?
- Make notes as you read, passages to quote in your review.
- Can you follow the author's thesis, "common thread"?
- What is the author's style? Formal? Informal? Suitable for the intended audience?
- Are concepts well defined? Is the language clear and convincing? Are the ideas developed? What areas are covered, not covered? How accurate is the information?
- Is the author's concluding chapter, the summary, convincing?
- If there are footnotes, do they provide important information? Do they clarify or extend points made in the text?
- If relevant, make note of the book's format - layout, binding, etc. Are there maps, illustrations? Are they helpful?
- Is the index accurate? What sources did the author use -- primary, secondary? Make note of important omissions.
- What did the book accomplish? Is more work needed? Compare the book to others by this author, or books in this field by other authors. (Use the books listed in the bibliography.)

Writing the Review:

- Include title, author, place, publisher, publication date, edition, pages, special features (maps, etc.), price, ISBN.
- Hook the reader with your opening sentence. Set the tone of the review. Be familiar with the guidelines -- some editors want plot summaries; others don't. Some want you to say outright if you recommend a book, but not others.
- Review the book you read -- not the book you wish the author had written.
- If this is the best book you have ever read, say so -- and why. If it's merely another nice book, say so.

- Include information about the author-- reputation, qualifications, etc. -- anything relevant to the book and the author's authority.
- Think about the person reading your review. Is this a librarian buying books for a collection? A parent who wants a good read-aloud? Is the review for readers looking for information about a particular topic, or for readers searching for a good read?
- Your conclusion should summarize, perhaps include a final assessment. Do not introduce new material at this point.
- To gain perspective, allow time before revising.

Writing a Fiction Book Review

Note: You don't have to answer every question -- they're suggestions!

Points to Ponder:

- What was the story about?
- Who were the main characters?
- Were the characters credible?
- What did the main characters do in the story?
- Did the main characters run into any problems? Adventures?
- Who was your favorite character? Why?

Your personal experiences

- Could you relate to any of the characters in the story?
- Have you ever done or felt some of the things, the characters did?

Your opinion

- Did you like the book?
- What was your favorite part of the book?
- Do you have a least favorite part of the book?
- If you could change something, what would it be? (If you wish you could change the ending, don't reveal it!)

Your recommendation

- Would you recommend this book to another person?
- What type of person would like this book?

Things to Bear in Mind:

Don't be intimidated by famous authors -- many have written mediocre books.

Don't review books by people you know, love, or hate.

Do you want to be a book reviewer? Start by doing. Write book reviews for local newspapers. If they don't have a book review section, start one.

If you have a specialty -- romance, mystery, dark fantasy -- cultivate it, become an expert.

How to Make a Great Poster: Ideas and tips to make a professional poster.

1. People have to read it. Use big letters, suggested fonts are 36 or 48 for text and 72 or bigger for titles. It may seem like the type is large enough, but beware. As a rule people should be able to read your poster from four feet away, and the title should be able to be read from at least ten feet away.
2. Don't challenge people's eyes. If you choose to use a background, use a light colour background and dark letters for contrast. Avoid dark backgrounds with light letters - very tiring to read. Don't make small pictures really big, they will show the pixels instead of the image, and it's distracting. Don't use funky font, there's a reason Times New Roman and Arial fonts are used commonly, because they are easy to read.
3. If you're presenting your poster don't read the poster to the audience. Instead, give the big picture of what you did, explain why the subject is important, and use the graphics to illustrate and support your key points.
4. Setup is important- Balance the placement of text and graphics making it visually attractive. Use white space creatively to define the flow of information. Column format makes poster easier to read in a crowd. Your graphs should look professional and have labels. Determine how big your poster really needs to be, just because you can print a big poster doesn't always mean you always should. Check how much information you have, and then think about what size you should use.
5. Take time in your creation. Take the time to present your information professionally. Spell Check. Proofread. Get feedback before printing. Take time to make a practice poster (maybe not even about the subject your presenting on), this will help you get used to the tools of making better posters. If you take the time to make your poster interesting, people might just get interested.

Here are some ideas on what should be included on your scientific poster:

- What's the research question?
- Why is this question important?
- What strategy is used?
- What are the results?
- Why are these results unique/important?
- How does this relate to other research?
- What research comes next?

ADVERTISEMENTS

Source: Wet Tropics Management Authority & infoacrs

The word advertising originates from a Latin word *advertise*, which means to turn to. The dictionary meaning of the term is “to give public notice or to announce publicly”. Advertising may be defined as the process of buying sponsor-identified media space or time in order to promote a product or an idea. Advertisements are usually found in magazines and newspapers, on television, radio and billboards, and even now on the Internet. Advertisements don’t just have to be about selling something. They can also persuade the public to change their behaviour. Successful advertisements usually adhere to the following structure, known as the **AIDA Theory**: Attention, Interest, Desire, Action

Your advertisement must catch the public’s ATTENTION:

- A successful advertisement will have something about it that attracts the attention of the public. Successful ways to catch attention include a jingle, a logo or slogan.

Your advertisement must maintain the public’s INTEREST:

After catching their attention, maintaining interest is the hardest part.

- You need to appeal to the public in some way so that what you are saying seems relevant to their lives.
- You can appeal to their emotions – happiness, fear, anger.
- You can appeal to their weaknesses – jealousy, vanity, selfishness.
- You can appeal to their problems – work issues, global conflicts.

Your advertisement must create or stimulate the public’s DESIRE:

Most people need or want something and many people need or want the same thing. You could stimulate:

- their need to belong
- their desire to get ahead in life
- their need for peace
- their desire to feel good about themselves
- their desire to protect their families.

Your advertisement must call for ACTION:

A successful advertisement will invite the public to take specific action. There might be a phone number to ring, a behaviour they can change, an internet address, or a group to join.

Hints

- Use the *present tense* because this makes your information sound more urgent.
- Use *emotive language* – try to get people to *feel* what you are saying.
- Use *imperative* verbs like ‘try’, ‘hurry’ and ‘act now’.

Basic Advertising Copy Structure

Headline- Headlines usually have the largest font size. It is usually 5 to 8 words in length. Use simple, easy to understand words. Appeal to the self interest of the audience.

The headline has several functions:

- gives news
- reinforces the brand
- attracts attention
- attracts a target market
- increases curiosity

- arouses emotions
- calls to action

Subhead line- This optional device often occurs right below the headline. The subhead line uses a few words that clarify, reinforces or explains the headline. The goal is to provide a smooth transition into the body copy.

Body Copy- This is the text in the advertisement that provides support and details about the product or the current offer. Often the body copy will use present tense, singular. Use Active verbs. Vary the sentence length. Involve the audience.

Many types of body copy are possible:

- benefits of the product
- testimonial from customers
- expert opinion
- narrative about the product or a customer
- examples
- options
- rhetorical questions
- statistics about the product
- positioning information

Tagline -Often this is the brand slogan that has been used for years

Logo- Brand symbol and/or words

URL of website

Advertising Age's TOP 10 SLOGANS OF THE CENTURY

1. Diamonds are forever (DeBeers)
2. Just do it (Nike)
3. The pause that refreshes (Coca-Cola)
4. Tastes great, less filling (Miller Lite)
5. We try harder (Avis)
6. Good to the last drop (Maxwell House)
7. Breakfast of champions (Wheaties)
8. Does she ... or doesn't she? (Clairol)
9. When it rains it pours (Morton Salt)
10. Where's the beef? (Wendy's)

NOTICES

A notice is an art in which we provide maximum information by using minimum words. It should be exact, precise, simple, clear and comprehensive so that the reader can understand it easily. While drafting a notice, the following steps should be kept in mind:

Characteristics of a well-written notice

- Proper heading/Title
- Date of issue
- Name and designation of the issuing authority
- Relevant content

The content should answer questions like:

- What
- When
- Where
- From whom
- Accurate expression

Sample Notice

You are Rishi/Roma, secretary of the Eco club of VIT University, which is celebrating 'Ban the plastics week' to create awareness regarding harms of plastics. Draft a suitable notice in not more than 50 words.

VIT UNIVERSITY, VELLORE

14 March 2016

NOTICE

BAN THE PLASTIC

The Eco Club is observing a Plastic Ban Week i.e., from 1 April to 7 April 2016 in VIT University Vellore. Several activities including songs, street plays, declamation, and poster making competitions will be held to create awareness about the ill-effects of plastics on our environment. For further details contact the undersigned.

Rishi
Secretary, Eco club
7643278600

Writing Formal and Informal Invitations

Source: <http://www.academicseasy.com/2013/07/replies-to-formal-invitations-1.html>

Features of a formal invitation:

1. It is single sentence presentation
2. It is written in the third person
3. There is no signature
4. The address is written at the bottom of the invitation
5. The date of the writing is not given
6. The simple present tense is used
7. The layout of the letter is such that each of the following is in a separate sheet
 - a. Name of the host
 - b. The standard expression
 - c. The reason of the invitation
 - d. The time and date of the event
8. Inline commas are used
9. Skip end of line punctuation

Format of a Formal Invitation:

1. Name (s) of the host (s)
2. Standard expression
 - a. Request the pleasure of your company
 - b. Solicit your gracious presence
 - c. Cordially invite you to
 - d. Cordially request the honour of your presence
 - e. Invite you join
 - f. Request your benign presence
 - g. Seek the pleasure of your presence
3. Purpose of the invitation
4. Name of the honouree
5. Day, date and time of the party/function/programme
6. Name of the place location with complete address
7. RSVP
8. Just below RSVP write the mobile no or address of the host

Sample questions:

Draft a formal invitation to be sent to your friends and relatives on the occasion of your son's marriage.

<p style="text-align: center;">Mrs. and Mr. Malhotra Request your benign presence at the wedding ceremony of their son Ritesh To Richa (D/O Mrs. and Mr Tayal) on Sunday, 27th April, 2016 at 8.30 PM at Grand Ridge Hotel, Bangalore.</p> <p>RSVP Mobile: 9886655444</p>
--

Draft a formal invitation to be sent to the parents and distinguished guests on the occasion of the annual day of your college.

<p style="text-align: center;">The Principal, Staff & Students Of KNP Junior College, Gandhi Nagar, Vellore Solicit your gracious presence on The Annual Day on Saturday, 9th April, 2016 at 5.00 PM at college grounds Sri S M Krishna Mathur The vice chancellor of JK University has kindly consented to be the chief guest</p> <p>RSVP Mobile: 8876549801</p>
--

Writing Informal Invitations

1. Sample informal Invitation letter.

Address

Date

My dear Suresh,

I am glad to inform you that the marriage of my younger brother Vikram comes off on Month, date, at time.

You are cordially invited to attend the auspicious occasion and bless the newlyweds.

Yours sincerely,

Name

2. Informal Letter of Refusal to an Invitation.

Address

Date

My dear Name

Thank you for your kind invitation on the auspicious occasion of the marriage of your brother Vikram on date, date and time. I very much regret to inform you that owing to some previous engagement I shall not be able to attend the function.

My Heartiest good wishes for the couple,

Yours sincerely,

Name