

cSw Story Focus & Formats

Is your research done? Have you interviewed a Science Star? Do you understand the science? Then it's time to write! (You may have to double back to sources for clarification, but you're ready to start your first draft.)

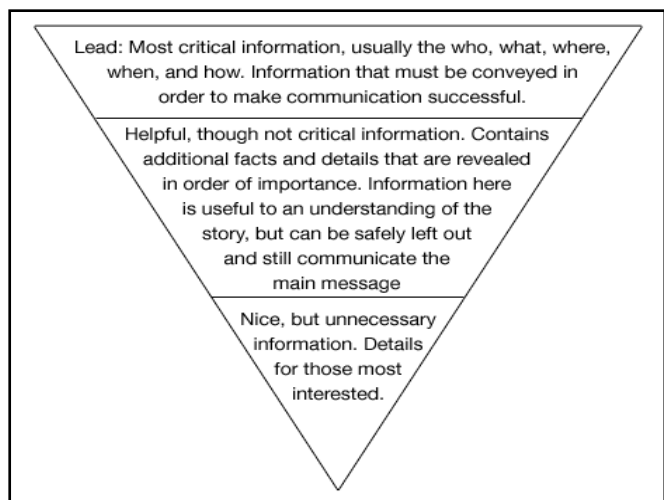
➡ You need to choose a **hook (angle/theme)** to focus your story. It can be about:

- **The scientist** (a look at how/why he or she is involved in the research; brings the science to life through the eyes/passion of the scientist)
- **The science** (or a particularly interesting/engaging piece of it)
- **A combination** (usually heavier on the science, but weaves in some interesting background or personality of the scientist)

➡ You also need to choose one of the following **formats** for your story:

1. **NEWS** - Inverted pyramid of journalism

Straight-forward fact-based.
Factual headline with key words.
Can include effective quotes.
The tone/voice is serious and objective.
Always written in third person.



2. **BLOG** - Short feature style

Creative, more friendly.
Creative headline with key words.
Can include effective quotes.
The tone/voice reflects the writer's style.
Can be written in first person.

Lead: Anecdote, question, metaphor or other topical/creative paragraph that conveys main theme.

Body: Supports theme, weaves in important facts/quotes; may continue creative approach from lead.

Conclusion: May reinforce theme and/or come full circle back to creative opening.



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3. Q&A - Interview style

Question and answer format.
Straight or creative headline with key words.
Requires well-crafted introduction;
clear, engaging questions; and well-edited
responses that are placed in the most
effective order.
The intro & questions reflect the writer's
voice, while the answers let us "hear" the
scientist.

Lead: *Introduction gives overview of theme*

Question

Answer

Question

Answer

Question

Answer



No matter which FOCUS or FORMAT you choose, your story must:

- be 700 words or less
- include key (searchable) words in the headline
- start with 2-3 engaging "In Brief" summary points
- have a Works Cited list



Don't forget to share your process and drafts with your Comms Mentor! They are here to help you!