

# Literacy Test Preparation: The News Report

## Definition and Characteristics

- A news report is an objective and factual report about an event or an issue. It is written in the past tense (think of the event as just having happened)
- The standard structure for news reports is called the Inverted Pyramid. See the following pages.
- On the Literacy Test, you will be given a picture and a headline. You must be imaginative and make up the facts and information to write a full news report. You must also make reference to the image and the headline in your report. Be creative. Past Literacy Test headlines have included, “Students Participate in Important Elections” and “Car Was a Success”.

## The Inverted Pyramid Model

**Headline:** The **headline** will be provided for you.

**Essential Information** is at the beginning of the news report.

- The article itself begins with the **lead**. The lead paragraph contains the most important information and answers the questions **WHO, WHAT, WHERE** and **WHEN**. This structure enables the reader to stop reading once he or she has sufficient information on the topic and allows the editor to crop the news report without affecting the crucial facts. *TIP: use the headline to help you with this information. It will contain most of it. Also, it is often best to write the information in the following order: WHEN + WHERE + WHO + WHAT*

**Less Important Details** follow.

- This section answers the questions **HOW** and **WHY** in more detail. It **supports** and **elaborates** on the main idea. This section includes
  - **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:** What event(s) lead up to the events? Your article might be a follow-up story about the community members that step in to help the family re-build the barn; so here you would remind the reader about the initial event
  - **QUOTATIONS FROM BYSTANDERS, PARTICIPANTS OR EXPERTS:** What do others have to say about it? Create at least two quotations.

**Non-Essential Extension Information** is at the end.

- This information can be cropped without compromising the meaning of the story.
- This section includes **EXTRA INFORMATION:**
  - Compare the event to other event(s)

## Style

- The news report presents facts objectively and does not use “I” or “me”.
- News paragraphs contain one to three (1-3) sentences. It is written in a series of short paragraphs.
- Transition between sentences and paragraphs are abrupt. Do not use transition words.
- Sentences are “mechanical” to “get the job done”.
- The text uses mostly simple sentences and uses few compound or complex sentences (that is sentences that use conjunctions or joining words)

## Steps

### 1. Plan

- Before you begin to write, think of some facts and information (the 5 Ws) to include in your news report.
- You will have to make up the facts and information in your report. Be creative. Think of facts to present in your lead paragraph and appropriate background information.

### 2. Write

- Write your lead paragraph (5 Ws) and the less important details (background information, quotations from bystanders or experts) and any non-essential information.
- Do not use “I” or “me” or make it sound like you are a news reporter live on location.
- Divide your news report appropriately into short paragraphs.
- Make sure you focus on a single event and a single moment in time to avoid your report sounding more like a story.
- Avoid personal names and places. Make them fictitious.
- Make sure when referring to people in your report, you call them by their first and last name the first time, and their last name thereafter...NEVER by the first name (too informal)
- If the person has a title, use it to add authority. For example, Mrs. Mardero, principal of St. Charles College said...
- Write in complete sentences in the lined space provided. Use correct spelling, grammar and punctuation so that your ideas are clearly communicated.

### 3. Proofread

- Make changes to your writing as neatly and clearly as you can.

## News Report Structure: The Inverted Pyramid

Essential Information



Non-Essential Information

# News Report Planner

## LEAD PARAGRAPH

*The lead paragraph answers WHO, WHAT, WHERE and WHEN*

WHO \_\_\_\_\_

WHAT \_\_\_\_\_

WHERE \_\_\_\_\_

WHEN \_\_\_\_\_

## SUPPORTING / BACKGROUND INFORMATION

*This section will have paragraphs of 2-3 sentences*

WHY \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

HOW \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What events lead up to this main event?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**QUOTATIONS**

*What do others have to say about it? Insert 2-3 quotations from various sources. Depending on your topic, it could be witnesses/bystanders, experts in the field, participants in the event.*

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**NON-ESSENTIAL / EXTRA INFORMATION**

*Compare the event to other event(s).*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_