

- **News story:** must have at *least* one credible source, follow inverted pyramid structure, usually around 300-600 words (a suggestion, not a hard limit)
 - Campus news: can be anything from a protest on campus to a new building announcement
 - Local or international news: can be anything, make sure to cite where you got information from
 - Ex: "An airplane crashed on the 405 freeway in Irvine at around 10 a.m. Tuesday, [the OC Register reports](#)."
- **Feature story:** Must have *at least* one credible source, can follow traditional inverted pyramid structure *and/or* include an anecdotal lead (can range anywhere from 300-1,000+ words)
 - A feature humanizes issues, events and people rather than a recitation of facts
 - Can be a human interest story, personality profile, etc.
 - Ex: Spotlighting a star student athlete, telling the story of how a unique club came to be, a story on a local coffee shop, etc.

Any news or feature story cannot contain any statements of opinion or opinionated words

- **Opinion piece:** Your first-person point of view on any issue you feel passionate about.
 - include research/data/statistics to back up your point
 - any substantive claims *must* be backed up
 - Cite someone/thing, hyperlink to your source, etc.
 - Counterarguments and short anecdotes make for good backing points
 - Can range anywhere in length (300-1,000 words)
 - A **review** is another type of opinion piece
 - You can review a local restaurant, a movie, TV show, album, etc.
 - For food reviews include detailed descriptions of the food, atmosphere, etc.
 - For movie reviews, describe the general plot but don't include spoilers
 - For music reviews, include specific details about the sound and examples of lyrics
- **Sports stories:** see page 4 for style details & [here for tips on writing 5 types of sports stories](#)

Timeliness vs. evergreen stories

- With *all* stories, be conscious of the timely elements
- **News stories** have *pressing* time elements. 7

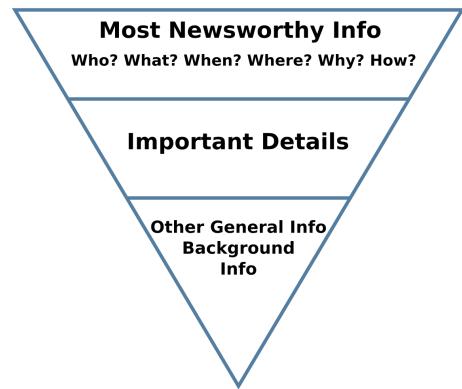
Abbreviations

- **months:** when used with a specific date, abbreviate only Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., and Dec.
 - Spell out when using alone, or with a year alone.
 - When a phrase lists only a month and a year, don't separate the year with commas. When a phrase refers to a month, day and year, set off the year with commas.
 - Examples: January 2016 was a cold month. Jan. 2 was the coldest day of the month. His birthday is May 8. Feb. 14, 2013, was the target date. She testified that it was Friday, Dec. 3, when the crash occurred.
- **years:** When a phrase refers to a month and day within the current year, do not include the year.
 - Examples: The meeting is scheduled for June 26. The project is set to be completed in July 2021.

What does an ideal Stentorian story look like?

- **LEADS/LEDES:** (21-28 words, 1-2 sentences)
 - Who, what, where, when, why
 - A reader should know exactly what they're about to read by reading the first sentence of your story.
 - Avoid using the time element as the first component in your lead.
 - Ex: On Sept. 20—senior Jane Doe scored the winning goal on the varsity women's soccer team on Sept. 20.
 - (*think of the "when" as the least important, and the "what" as the most important*)
 - Sept. 20, 2018 (September 20th, 2018)

- Avoid beginning your lead with a number
- Avoid flowery language, (unless you're writing an anecdotal lead)
- Another kind of lead is an **anecdotal lead**:
 - Sometimes, beginning a story with a short anecdote can hook in readers.
 - **Anecdotal leads** are good to use in feature stories, personality profiles, sports features, etc.
- **STORY FORMATTING:** top-heavy stories
 - News stories should almost always follow the **inverted pyramid** structure:
 - Most important & interesting info presented *first* as concisely as possible
 - *Avoid* following a typical English essay of intro, body, conclusion.
 - Follow up with secondary information in the “**nut graf**” or the second paragraph, offering context and transitioning from the lead into the body of the story and informing the reader of the story’s purpose
 - Ideally, your best quotes should be high up in your story. Your best quote can usually work perfectly as a third paragraph
 - Try using subheadings to break down a longer story into shorter, more digestible bites for your readers



- **CITING SOURCES & QUOTE FORMATTING:**

- For any news, feature, sports story (any story that *isn't* an opinion piece/first person narrative), you must have **at least one reputable source** (2-4 recommended)

Common mistakes to avoid:

- Numbers zero through nine are spelled out, numbers 10 and over are written as numerals
- Movies, book titles, music albums and song titles are all in “quotes”
- Percent is spelled out
- Avoid oxford commas
- Don’t insert your opinion unless it’s an opinion piece

- Sources can be:
 - student voices, teacher voices
 - Community voices
 - Professional voices
 - (experts on a specific subject like a professor)
 - Credible external sources
- Cite info derived from reputable sources (news publications, scholarly journals, universities, etc.) as “**according to** _____” and hyperlink the article
- If you use a quote from another publication, cite it as so. Ex: “Trump told the Washington Post.”
- For news, every single fact, statistic and quote needs to be attributed
 - “according to the L.A. Times,” or “as reported by the L.A. Times,” etc.
- Identify students by grade (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior)
 - If no grade level to use, identify by age
 - Ex: “*quote here*,” 17-year-old Jane Doe said.
- Title, Firstname Lastname on first reference
- Last name only on second and all other references
- Teachers are identified by first and last name, no “Mr.” or “Mrs.”
 - Identify by job title (Ex: Physics teacher Jane Doe)
- Formatting quotes:
 - Try to use “*Quote here*,” he said. Avoid “*Quote*,” ~~said he~~.
 - Use “*said*” and not other descriptive words (Ex: ~~exclaimed, retorted~~)
 - Avoid using present tense.
 - Incorrect ex.: ~~Senior Jane Garcia agreed, saying, “AP Calc was the hardest class I’ve ever taken.”~~
 - Correct ex.: “AP Calc was the hardest class I’ve ever taken,” senior Jane Garcia said.
 - Full-sentence transitions between quotes (in new paragraph)
 - No double stacking quotes
 - Paraphrasing quotes: in your own words, summarize what they said, but still attribute it to them

- Avoid repetition/redundancy



- **PHOTOS:**

- All photos must be captioned with photographer credit and describe what is going on in the image
- *A featured image required, please provide your own!*
 - Please do your best to make your own story art
 - Take your own photos, ask a classmate to take one for you or even model for you →
 - Draw your own art, if you don't have a cartoonist in your class, ask around and maybe you'll find one!
 - ← If you're writing a personality profile on someone who doesn't want to be photographed, get creative! Take photos of their hands, shoes, smile, or anything else that you feel reflects their personality ←
 - If you absolutely need to find an image online (see this as a last resort), refine a google image search for images "labeled for reuse only" →
 - **Captions:**
 - are always written as a complete sentence in present tense
 - always clearly describe what is happening in the photo, with any necessary context
 - Always include photographer credit
 - If you, the author of the story, took your own photo, the credit should appear as: (Photo by Jane Doe)
 - If someone else took the photo, the credit should appear as: (Photo courtesy of Jane Doe)
 - Also acceptable credit formats are:
 - (Jane Doe / The Stentorian)
 - (Jane Doe / Foothill Dragon Press)

Sports stories:

- Scores:

- Use figures exclusively, placing a hyphen between the totals of the winning and losing teams
- The Reds defeated the Red Sox 4-3, the Giants scored a 12-6 football victory over the Cardinals, the golfer had a 5 on the first hole but finished with a 2-under-par score.

Basketball numbers:

- in the first quarter, a second quarter lead, nine field goals, a 3-pointer, 3-point play, 10 field goals, the 6-foot-5 forward, the 6-10 center. He is 6 feet, 10 inches tall.

Commonly used phrases:

● air ball	● half-court pass
● alley-oop	● hook shot
● backboard	● jump ball
● foul line	● jump shot
● foul shot	● layup
● free throw	● man-to-man
● free-throw line	● pivot man
● frontcourt	● tip off (v.)

Football:

- use figures for yardage:
 - 5-yard line, 10-yard pass, he ran 6 yards.
 - exceptions: a fourth-and-two play.
- Spell out quarters: "Arizona won the first quarter, USC lost the second quarter," etc.
- Phrases/spelling: end zone, field goal, fair catch, fullback, halftime, handoff, place-kicker, quarterback, goal-line, three-and-out, etc.
- For statistics: "Peyton Manning led Tennessee to a 49-24 championship victory, throwing for 299 yards and five touchdown passes."

- full-court press
- goaltending

- tipoff (n., adj.)

League: National Basketball Association or NBA.

For subdivisions: the Atlantic Division of the Eastern Conference, the Pacific Division of the Western Conference, etc. On second reference: the NBA East, the division, the conference, etc.

- When describing height: "Six-foot-three junior wideout Calvin Johnson..."

Cross-Country

- Scoring for this track event is in minutes, seconds and tenths of a second. Extended to hundredths if available.
 - National AAU Championship
 - Cross-Country
 - Frank Shorter, Miami, 5:25.67; 2. Tom Coster, Los Angeles, 5:30.72
- Adapt the basic summary to paragraph form under a dateline for a field of more than 10 competitors.

Baseball numbers:

- ex: first inning, seventh-inning stretch, 10th inning
- first base, second base, third base
- first home run, 10th home run
- first place, last place
- one RBI, 10 RBIs.

- When describing field goals attempts/makes: "Ball shot just three-of-eight."
- Numbers under 10 are spelled out. Ex: "Freedman finished with eight points, six rebounds and five steals."
- For playoff descriptions (describing seeds): "12th-seeded Rancho Verde beat fifth-seeded Santa Margarita."
- For back-to-back quotes: "This game was incredible," he said. "I can't describe what this win means."
- Tips/Tricks for game stories: For game stories, try using the **Inverted Pyramid Style (most important info/plays first, followed by stats)**.
- After referencing a player's full name once ("Jake Kyman"), only use the last name throughout the rest of the story ("Kyman").
- Always include pictures (videos also, if possible) to make the story as engaging as possible.
- With the exception of a crazy game-ending sequence, include the final score in your lede. Ex: "Against his former team, Kyrie Irving scored 25 points and led the Boston Celtics to a 102-98 victory over the Cleveland Cavaliers."

Golf numbers:

Use figures for handicaps:

He has a 3 handicap; a 3-handicap golfer, a handicap of 3 strokes; a 3-stroke handicap.

Use figures for par listings

- He had a par 5 to finish 2-up for the round, a par-4 hole
- a 7-under-par 64, the par-3 seventh hole
- The first hole, a nine-hole course, the 10th hole, the back nine, the final 18.

It isn't necessary to spell out the most common abbreviations on first reference

NBA, NFL, MLB

AstroTurf:

Bullpen: One word, for the place where baseball pitchers warm up

coach: lowercase in all uses, as a job description, not a formal title.

stadium/stadiums: Capitalize only when part of a proper name: Yankee Stadium

style specifics:

- Referring to marginalized groups
 - General guidelines for writing about sexual orientation, gender identity, race and ethnicity are similar: Avoid stereotypes, and mention sexual orientation/gender identity/ethnicity only when they are relevant to the story, [according to the LA Times](#).
- Immigration:
 - Basic guidelines and definitions for the use of immigration-related terms:
 - **illegal immigration**: entering or residing in a country without authorization in violation of civil or criminal law.
 - Except in direct quotes essential to the story, use illegal only to refer to an action, not a person: illegal immigration, but *not* illegal immigrant.
 - Acceptable variations include living in or entering a country illegally or without legal permission.
 - Do *not* use the terms alien, an illegal, illegals or undocumented (except when quoting people or government documents that use these terms).
 - Do *not* describe people as violating immigration laws without attribution.
 - Specify wherever possible how someone entered the country illegally and from where. Crossed the border? Overstayed a visa? What nationality?
 - **Undocumented immigrant**
 - Never use “illegal immigrant”
 - Use “illegal” only to refer to an action, not a person
 - You can use illegal immigration, but never illegal immigrant
 - Acceptable variations include “living in” or “entering a country illegally” or “without legal permission”
 - (see [semi-recent AP style change](#))
- LGBTQ reporting:
 - **LGBTQ**
 - LGBTQ and LGBT are AP style acceptable, LGBTQ is preferred
 - While LGBTQ+ is not recognized by AP style, HS Insider will accept its usage only if it particularly applies to someone who identifies under that umbrella term specifically, as the “+” can include other identities such as intersex, asexual, etc.
 - Always ask someone you’re referring to what they identify as
 - **They/them/their** are AP style acceptable singular pronouns for nonbinary people — individuals who do not identify as male or female.
 - Also acceptable for when gender is unknown (but always ask whenever possible)
 - (see [recent AP style change](#))
- Queer:
 - Queer can be used to describe either someone’s sexuality and/or gender. Be sure to specify
 - Queer was previously considered a term to avoid because of its history of being used pejoratively. However, “queer” is now generally accepted usage among people who are not exclusively heterosexual, but don’t identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender or as an umbrella term for the LGBTQ+ community
 - Genderqueer is also a separate term used by some who doesn’t identify with male or female
 - Always double check with your sources what they identify as and if they’re comfortable being referred to as “queer” as an umbrella term
- Transgender people:

- Identify transgender people with the names and pronouns they use and that are consistent with the way they publicly live
 - If you are unsure, ask your source what their pronouns are
- **Never...**
 - Never say that a transgender man was “born a woman”
 - If this information is vital to your story, say he was “designated/identified/assigned female at birth”
 - Never use terms that have fallen out of acceptable usage
 - I.e. “hermaphrodite,” “homosexual,” “openly gay,” “transvestite” and “transsexual” are unacceptable
- **JOURNALISTIC ETHICS:**
 - Ethical journalism should be accurate and fair. Journalists and all writers should be honest and courageous in gathering, reporting and interpreting information, according to the Society of Professional Journalists.
 - Information attributed to someone in direct quotes must be word-for-word exactly how the person said it.
 - Never take a quote from another publication/a tweet/instagram caption and claim it as your own.
 - It’s OK to use a quote from elsewhere, *as long as you attribute it.*
 - I.e. “said in a tweet”/ “told the New York Times”
- **Five principles of journalism:**
 - Truth and Accuracy
 - Independence
 - Fairness and Impartiality
 - Humanity
 - Accountability

More AP Style Resources

[Purdue Owl Online Writing Lab](#)

[AP Style Guide Cheat Sheet](#)

[WJEA AP Style Guide Cheat Sheet](#)

[Diversity Style Guide](#)