



## HOW TO WRITE A PRESS RELEASE

A press release should tell your story exactly as you want it told. Be clear and concise, and keep your message consistent. The main part of your release will be the “6 W’s”—What, Who, When, Where, Why and How. Also include your “boilerplate”—a short section, at the end, about your group. Be sure to include the important elements of date, release information, and your daytime and nighttime contact information, and use the prescribed format—see the sample press release in the toolkit.

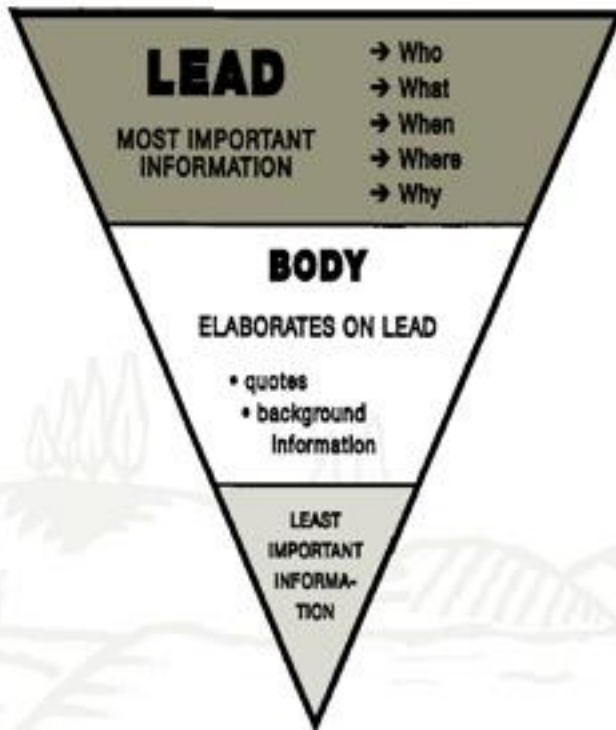
Keep it to less than one page, and use the tips below for structuring it.

### Tips for Writing for the Media

(Credit & thanks for these materials go to Celia Alario, the staff of the Spin Project, Fenton Communications, Ripple Strategies, and voice coach Vicki Post. All material is ‘Copy Left’ or ‘Creative Commons,’ so feel free to share, but please credit these folks!)

- Focus on the headline and subhead (spend 80% of your time on those & the first paragraph)
- The second to last paragraph should ‘further the story’
- The last paragraph should include info on your organization (purpose, mission, campaigns, size, etc)
- Use the ‘inverted pyramid:

The Inverted Pyramid:





### Things to remember with your messaging...

- Claim What You WANT, Not Just What You Don't Want
- Keep it relevant
- Appeal to shared values or a public need
- Try to use an angle that would have universal appeal
- Remember: Clarity, Consistency, Credibility
- Anticipate: What Will Journalists Ask? What Will The 'Opposition' Say?
- What Is Your Dream Headline/Photo? Provide these!

### ...and always ask yourself: What is newsworthy?

- New
- Announcement
- Exemplary of a Trend
- Variation on an already newsworthy theme
- Localize a national story
- Nationalize a local story
- Dramatic Human Interest
- Visuals
- Pulls Heart Strings
- Controversy
- Fresh angle on an old story
- Anniversaries
- Calendar hook
- Profiles and Personnel
- Special Event
- Respond & React
- Celebrity
- Unusual or Ironic
- Danger or Threat

### Elements of a Press Release, from Wikipedia:

- **Headline** - used to grab the attention of journalists and briefly summarize the news.
- **Dateline** - contains the release date and usually the originating city of the press release.
- **Introduction** - first paragraph in a press release, that generally gives basic answers to the questions of who, what, when, where and why.
- **Body** - further explanation, statistics, background, or other details relevant to the news.
- **Boilerplate** - generally a short "about" section, providing independent background on the issuing company, organization, or individual.
- **Close** - in North America, traditionally the symbol "-30-" appears after the boilerplate or body and before the media contact information, indicating to media that the release is ending. A more modern equivalent has been the "###" symbol. In other countries, other means of indicating the end of the release may be used, such as the text "ends".
- **Media Contact Information** - name, phone number, email address, mailing address, or other contact information for the PR or other media relations contact person.