

FOUR PARTS OF A FEATURE STORY

1. Lead

2. Transitions

3. Quotes

4. Conclusion

LEAD

Purpose: To catch a reader's attention and make them want to read on while introducing your story's topic and angle.

How do you do this?

- By using your most creative, descriptive writing in “setting the scene”
- By keeping it short, but still introducing the topic. (1 to 2 sentences)
- By building suspense and saving some information for later.
- By rewriting, rewriting, rewriting.

TRANSITIONS

Purpose: To help the reader move smoothly through the story by trying together each topic.

How do you do this?

- By creating an outline grouping together similar ideas and topics.
- By presenting important background information gained through research, interviews, polls, and surveys.
- By paraphrasing information told to you by sources that isn't intriguing enough to be a quote.
- By referring to an upcoming quote, restating the idea or opinion presented.

QUOTES

Purpose: To engage the reader's interest by presenting someone's unique perspective.

How do you do this?

- By using effective questioning techniques in interviews.
 - By focusing on questions dealing with “how” and “why”
 - By asking intriguing, open-ended questions
- By allowing your source to speak. You should only speak about 20% of the time during an interview.
- By soliciting anecdotes, personal stories, and opinions.
- By only selecting quotes that are unique; avoiding mundane, predictable responses.

How to write a quote:

“I drive a bus,” said Bus Driver Bip Smith. “It’s the most important and underappreciated job in the world.”

“Stop whining,” said Senior Fib Bibble, “and get to work.”

AVOID OBVIOUS, PREDICTABLE QUOTES:

“I was really excited when I was chosen Homecoming queen,” said Sheila Shellshocked.

“The football team was great this year,” said Captain Bart Biceps, “even if we didn’t win a game.”

“We all worked together as a team and became a family,” said Senior Sally Smiley.

“Math can be fun,” said Math Teacher Mr. Cal Q. Luss, “if you work hard.”

AVOID POTENTIALLY OFFENSIVE QUOTES:

“I go to volleyball games because of all the hot chicks in tight spandex shorts,” said Senior Danny Drooler.

“The only reason I failed math was because Mr. Luss sucks,” said Freshman Farrah F. Failure.

“I heard that the main reason the football team was so bad was because Bart Biceps was whacked out on steroids,” said A. Nonymous Student.

CONCLUSION

Purpose: To leave your reader with a strong final impression of your story and its angle.

How do you do this?

- By quickly summarizing your main idea (about one sentence)
- By referring back to a device used in your lead
- By relying on a unique quote that “says it all”
- By avoiding predictions for next year, “cheerleading”, or “words of wisdom”

SAMPLE LEAD-TRANSITION-QUOTE STORY

Gotcha!

The lighter side of teaching reveals teacher mishaps and unique pranks

A group of students crept quietly out of the English room. After shutting the door, the class surveyed its handiwork and snickered collectively. Crouched around the corner, they hid with anxiety. Moments later, the teacher's scream echoed through the hallway.

Although academics came first, friendly pranks between students and teachers remained strikingly visible at BHS. Of teachers surveyed, 60 percent said they pulled pranks on other teachers. A variety of stories sat on the tip of each teacher's tongue, waiting to be shared.

"On my birthday, a bunch of teachers decorated my room with blinking purple lights, Vikings decorations and anything else that may be purple," said Writing and Mass Media Teacher **Mrs. Vicki Cary**. "I have since learned to be less blatant about my support for the Packers."

While half of the teachers surveyed felt that their level of experience played a role in targeting, the other half disagreed. Sense of humor and comfort levels may have played larger roles than experience alone.

"I believe that pranks are pulled on teachers by students who are comfortable with them," said Band Director **Mr. Lee Kjesbo**.

"While pranks remained avid, embarrassing moments proved even more abundant. Of teachers surveyed, 87 percent said they endured at least one embarrassing moment in their career.

"In a rush to get stuff out of a file cabinet, I pulled two drawers out at the same time, and the whole thing tipped over on me. A container of fluid slid off and broke all over the floor," said Science Teacher **Mr. Boyd Emmel**. "The cabinet remained on top of me until two students pulled it off of me."

"I started my hair on fire during a ninth grade science demonstration," said Science Teacher **Mrs. Barbara Fjelstad**. "Fortunately, I was able to put it out without too much damage, and I turned the incident into a safety lesson when using an open flame with long hair."

All joking aside, the school's open environment made embarrassing moments and friendly pranks commonplace, while keeping a fun learning environment for students. Memories of pranks and entertaining moments remained etched into the minds of students and teachers alike.

"I can teach Julius Caesar and I can have one embarrassing moment," said English Teacher **Mrs. Karen Swenson**. "Of course, the students only remember that one embarrassing moment."

-By Shayla Wilson and Philip Mackey