

## ANATOMY OF A NEWS STORY

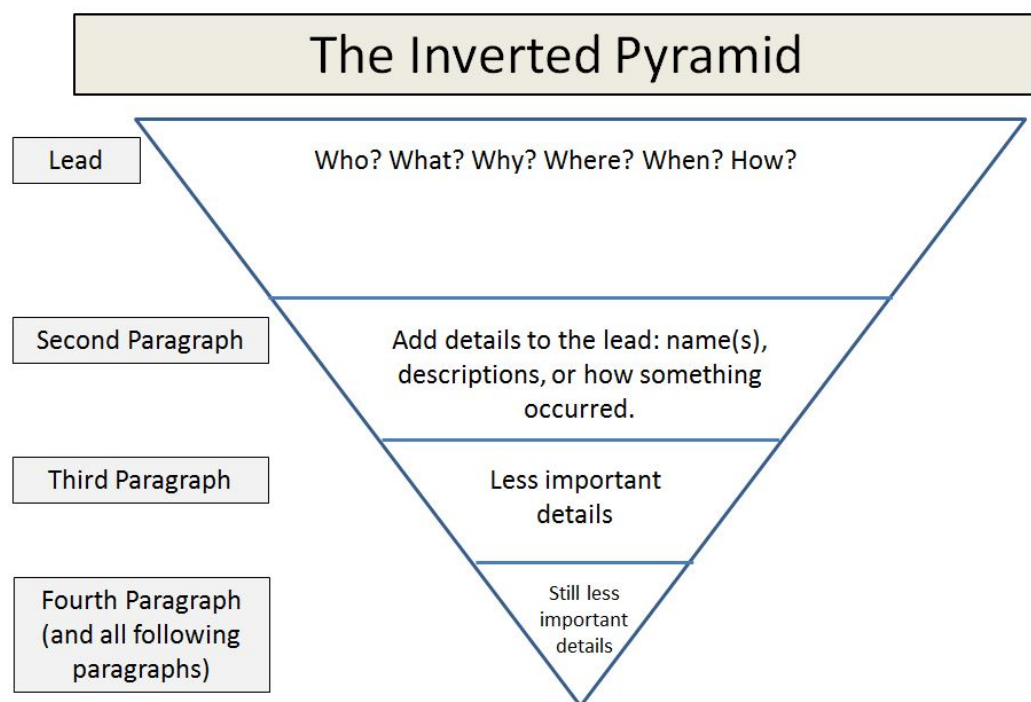
1. **Headline.** Always write a headline, or a title, for your article. What are the headlines for the sample news stories? The headline should be *accurate, specific*, and **NOT editorialize**.
2. **Dateline.** This is an indication of the date and place where the news occurs.

*For this competition, the dateline will be: LOS ANGELES, March 23 —*

3. **The Lede.** The “lede” is also known as the “lead paragraph,” or the first paragraph of the news story. It is very important. It both (1) informs the reader what the story is about, and (2) entices the reader to continue reading. Remember, you are *not* reporting on the *competition*. You are reporting on the *trial* as if it is a real event.

Tips for writing ledes:

- A reader should read the lede and know the *essential* who, what, why, where, when, and how of the news story. If the reader stops reading, they should still be able to tell someone the basics of what happened.
  - Do not include too much detail. Only include the essentials.
  - Use the names of *public figures* only.
  - Don’t “bury the lede”! For example, don’t wait until the middle or end of the article to reveal the verdict.
4. **Structure of the Story.** Your story is “straight news.” It reports on an important event of the day. Straight news stories are not usually chronological like a “feature story” might be. Straight news generally follows a certain structure known as the *inverted pyramid*:



| <b>SCORING</b>  |             |
|---|-------------|
| Item  | Point Value |
| Enticing Lead Paragraph with Essential Facts of the Trial - Did the reporter develop an enticing lead paragraph with the necessary and basic facts of the case? (Who, what, where, when, why, and how.)   | 5           |
| Newsworthy Facts - Did the reporter write about the most newsworthy facts that occurred <i>during the trial</i> and not merely reiterate the case packet?   | 5           |
| Story Structure - Did the reporter properly structure the story with the most important elements early in the article (inverted pyramid)?   | 5           |
| Vivid Reporting - Did the reporter make the article vivid by using well-chosen direct quotes from testimony and/or descriptions of the courtroom scene, participants, or their behavior? <i>And</i> did the reporter write as if this was a real trial and not a high school competition? | 5           |
| Mechanics - Did the reporter use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation?  | 5           |
| Pretrial - Did the reporter include appropriate coverage of the pretrial motion?  | 3           |
| Legal Procedures and Judicial Process - Did the reporter demonstrate sufficient understanding of legal procedures and the judicial process?   | 3           |
| Fair and Accurate - Did the reporter present a fair and accurate account of events without any apparent editorial slant?  | 3           |
| Headline - Did the reporter have an accurate headline that does not editorialize?   | 3           |
| Dateline - Did the reporter have the proper dateline?   | 3           |
| Holistic Assessment - Review the article in its entirety. Review for its overall accuracy, storytelling, and if it followed the rules/requirements.   | 5           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>45</b>   |