

Guidelines and Information



The Modern Post – Guidelines and Information

Always adhere to proper Canadian Press style when writing articles for your friendly, neighbourhood online news magazine!

How to write an article¹:

- Step 1: Gather information
- Step 2: Check your sources
 - Make sure you can verify your sources
- Step 3: Properly cite your sources
 - If you interview a source, specify that they were interviewed by *The Modern Post*.
 - “I saw the light,” said Eugene Fitzherbert, in an interview with *The Sheridan Sun*.
 - If someone else interviews a source, specify that they were interviewed by a separate entity
 - “Eugene saw the light,” said Anna Bell, in an interview with the CBC.
- Step 4: Watch your words
 - We’re in the news business, not the entertainment business, so remember to stick to the truth – not your vision of the truth
- Step 5: Structure your articles with the inverted pyramid in mind
 - First two paragraphs: Who, what, where, when, why, and how
 - Middle paragraphs: More information on the topic
 - Final two paragraphs: Extraneous information
 - Writing for a newspaper is different than writing an essay, you don’t need a lengthy introductory section – just get to the point
- Step 6: Copy editing
 - Is everything spelled correctly?
 - Is everything written in Canadian English? (“ou” not “o” ... it’s the difference between “Colour” and “Color”)
 - Have you remembered to include a headline?
 - Have you uploaded a feature image? Is there a source for your feature image (do you have permission to use it)?
 - Are all of your numbers properly formatted?
 - Zero to nine are written out, 10 and greater are written as numbers
 - Are all of your dates properly formatted?
 - Sept. 3, not September 3rd
 - Months with five or fewer letters are written out, months with more than five letters are abbreviated:

¹ “How to write an article” is sourced from The Ontario, the University of Guelph’s independent student newspaper.

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- Jan., Feb., March, April, May, June, July, Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec.
- Is time properly formatted?
 - 7 p.m., not seven pm
 - 7:15 a.m., not quarter-past-seven
- Are publications and works of art properly formatted?
 - *Books, movies, TV shows, music albums*: All italicized
 - "Chapters," "TV episodes," "music tracks," "poems": All put in "Quotes"

Headlines²:

1. Titles should be short and concise—use short appropriate short forms and last names.
2. Titles are written in sentence style. Thus, anything that wouldn't be capitalized in a sentence will not in the title.
3. Titles as a general rule should not be longer than five to seven words.
4. Examples: Sheridan announces new program; U.S. stands firm on Paris agreement; SSU president speaks out on budget; World agrees on climate change

Checklist³:

1. Does your story have a title?
2. Does your story have a lede sentence?
3. Do you have at least one category selected?
4. Do you have quotes?
5. Do you have a featured image with a caption?
6. Do you have non-copyrighted photos?

² "Headlines" is sourced from *The Avro Post*, *The Univeristy of Guelph-Humber's independent student publication*.

³ "Checklist" is sourced from *The Avro Post*, *The Univeristy of Guelph-Humber's independent student publication*.

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Things to keep in mind:

1. Before writing any story, write a focus statement. This will help when writing – not only with what to write, but also what your writing is about.
2. You have an audience. The Modern Post aims to tell stories about _____
3. Original reporting. It's important to keep in mind the question: "how can I put a unique spin on this story?" Do some digging and see what you can find.
4. If you need help, ask your editor. They will have an idea of what's going on now and can help you pinpoint exactly what you should be researching for your story.
5. **DON'T FORGET PICTURES.** Pictures are key to online storytelling. People will often look at those and nothing else. Is there an opportunity for you to get your own photographs for a story? Is there something you could cover before the news day that might make it to air? This course gives you the opportunity to create, take it! The sky's the limit here, let's see what you've got!
6. **DO NOT COPY/PASTE INFORMATION.** While this may sometimes seem like the easy way out, you risk a lot by copying from another news source. While there are instances where using quotes or information from another source can be useful, lifting content is not okay. Do as much reading as you feel comfortable doing before beginning to write your piece. Don't worry about spelling or grammar right now, that's what the editor is for. Plagiarism is not okay in academia or journalism, and any article with plagiarism will not be tolerated at The Modern Post.
7. **Do your best.** It's okay if it doesn't turn out the way you imagined but put the effort in and try anyway. Take pictures, get audio, use the KnightLab tools. Whatever you must do to make the articles you create interesting, engaging, and informative.