

Requirements for Writing CT News Stories

- 1/ The length of a news story generally should be 300–500 words, but it can be 1000 words and more, if there is reason for that.
- 2/ Breaking news can be as short as 100–150 words.
- 3/ The lead should give readers the most important news contained in the story in a catchy manner appealing to the audience. The length of the lead is between 30–40 words.
- 4/ The first paragraph after the lead can be 30–50 words long.
- 5/ In the lead and the first paragraph after the lead, we write *who* did what, and *when*, and *why* it's important. Below, we put down the details.
- 6/ The "when" is an exact date or a day of a current week, not "yesterday" or "two days ago." E.g., "May 27" or "Wednesday."
- 7/ The "who" in the lead is:
 - A publicly known name of a person, e.g., Edward Snowden said Wednesday, Roger Ver stated, ... (avoid colorful verbs such as "accused" that border on stating author opinion about events)
 - A person's position, if he's not known very much — The Money, Inc. CEO announced (his or her name may come below)
 - A company name: Google launches ...
 - A government body or a state — Panama sues Britain, FBI arrested ...
- 8/ "Who" part should not be long in lead, but below we can elaborate. E.g., "Edward Snowden" in lead, and in the first paragraph after the lead, "The former NSA contractor who disclosed top secret U.S. government information has revealed ... " etc.
- 9/ The "why it's important" part summarizes, in as few words as possible, our angle of looking on the news. Here, we write about what the event changes or might change, from our prospective. For instance, "The new platform launched Saturday will transform mobile finance."
- 10/ A lead should have a bite for the readers to make them want to read further. The lead also establishes the direction of an article.
- 11/ The body of the story provides more details on the news summarized in the first two paragraphs.
- 12/ The background comes after, not before, the story itself is told.
- 13/ Don't write conclusions in news stories. If you have to say anything of essence, use the current structure. You may show the angle in the lead, and say whatever

you consider important in the body of the story. The most important facts come first.

14/ Each story should contain at least two experts' quotes or opinions. If it's a breaking news story and it's very important for us to beat competition and publish it first, we may not wait until the comments arrive, and publish the story with the quotes already available. However, we either update it after publishing, inserting the quotes obtained, or write a follow-up.

15/ News stories should contain figures relevant to the story, infographics and charts. It's an author's duty to find relevant figures and data for the charts.

16/ The news story can't be based on the writer's opinion. Then, *it is opinion* and should be considered as an op-ed. Leave yourself out of the story and just present the facts. Let readers draw their own conclusions from the story.

17/ In news stories, don't use words that can be considered biased or promotional, for instance (but not only), superlative adjectives (that describe extremes). Examples: best, worst, biggest, smallest, easiest, etc. Use these words only in quotes, if a source says them, but still be careful about presenting a one-sided, promotional slant on the news.

18/ All statements in your article should be sourced. Provide links or tell where you found the information.

19/ Don't use sentences over 20 words long. It's always possible to split sentences into shorter fragments.

20/ Use strong, single-word verbs. Avoid passive tenses and complex participle forms (verbs containing more than one word). Examples:

- They *speak* English. (Passive: English *is spoken*.)
- The U.S. government *arrested* Ross Ulbricht. (Passive: Ross Ulbricht *was arrested*.)
- Peter Todd *criticized* Gavin Andresen. (Andresen *was criticized* by Todd.)

21/ Include subheads for each 150 words. Subhead length is generally one to two words, three at most.