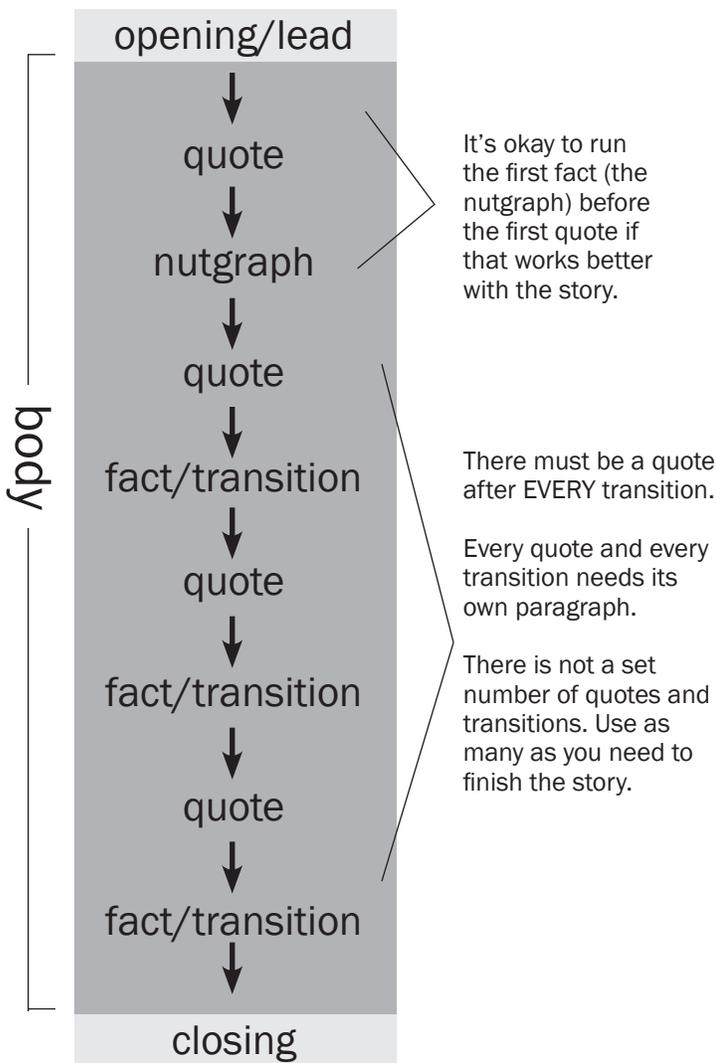
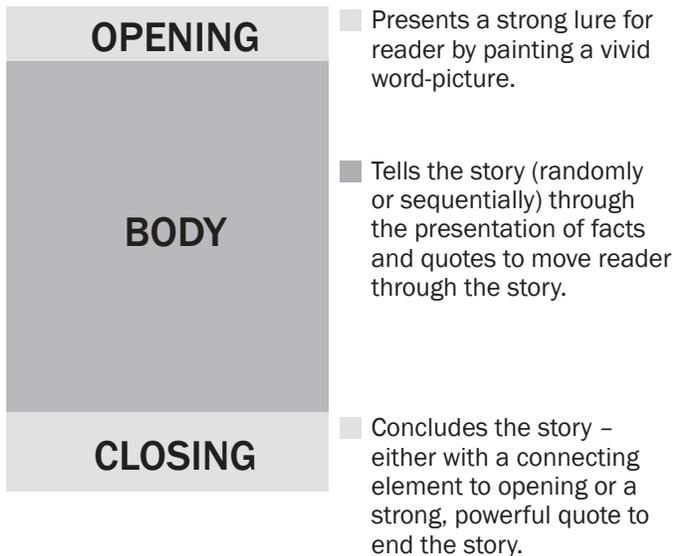


story formula

Forget everything you learned in English class. Well, almost everything. While journalism stories have an opening, body and conclusion, there's no flowery language or long paragraphs.

In a graphic, here's how journalism stories work:



parts of the story

LEAD

The opening, called the “lead” is the most important part of the story. It can be straight news or feature, but it needs to draw the reader in.

The lead can be as short as one word or it can be a few sentences. But try to keep it under 35 words.

NUTGRAPH

Usually following the lead or the first quote, this paragraph tells you the crux of the story, i.e. what the story is about.

QUOTES

Quotes are the heart of the story, giving the emotions, opinions and reflections of the facts. **DO NOT QUOTE FACTS.**

TRANSITIONS

Transitions present the factual information and paraphrase indirect quotes.

Transitions help readers move smoothly from one part of the story to the next. They help arrange facts in order and serve as bridges from one quote to the next.

CONCLUSION

The best conclusion is a natural extension of the story. It flows as smoothly and effortlessly as the ending of a song.

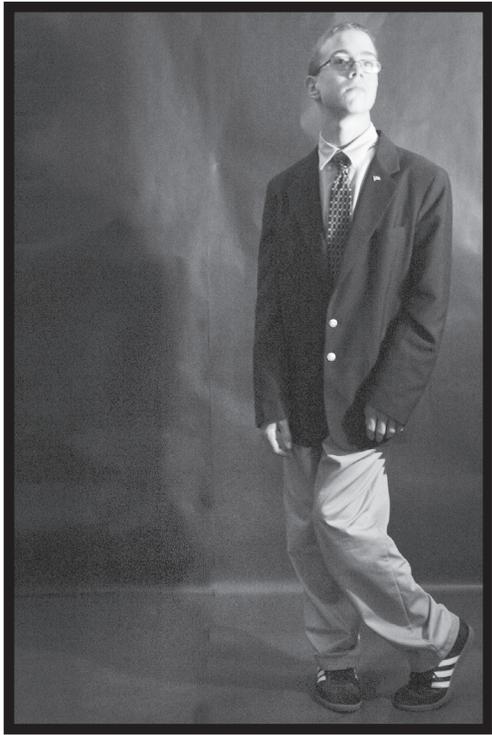
Closing provides reader with a strong ending thought or visual, usually a powerful quote, but could also be a connecting element back to the opening.

other important things to remember:

- The story is told through a series of short paragraphs. Each quote and each fact needs its own paragraph. **DO NOT COMBINE TOGETHER.**
- You can't have a quote right after a quote. You can't have a transitions right after a transition. There **MUST** be a quote between each transition. There **MUST** be a transition between each quote.
- The quotes support or further expand on the facts in the transition. The transitions give facts and bridge from one topic to the next, one speaker to the next.

story formula

Forget everything you learned in English class. Well, almost everything. While journalism stories have an opening, body and conclusion, there's no flowery language or long paragraphs.



You see them in the halls. You sit with them at lunch. But how well do you really know your classmates? Find out what they never told you in their...



Last in a series of *The Connection's* spot on students

GERALDRICHARDSON

Lead →
Intro to the story.

Hop, now step. With all his concentration. Hop, now step. *Even*, he says to himself – *keep your legs even*. One, now two. One, now two.

Quote →
First quote sets the tone of the story, logically follows angle of lead or tells story from individual perspective.

Twisting and hobbling, his feet unevenly hit the floor. But he doesn't mind. He's used to it.

"The way I walk used to really upset me," freshman Gerald Richardson said. "But it doesn't matter anymore. I know I can't change who I am, and I never could. I had no choice in how I turned out, but I have a choice in how I deal with it."

Nutgraph →

Explains what the story is about.

Richardson was born premature, weighing only two pounds. Seconds after birth, his condition worsened. Trauma in his lungs led to a stroke in his brain – doctors thought he wouldn't survive.

But Richardson made it. He was physically damaged for life – brain tissue was impaired, and he was diagnosed with cerebral palsy, a disorder marked by muscle impairment that affects his control of movement.

Quote →
Nice, detailed quote to support first fact.

"I never knew I was different until I started school," Richardson said. "I realized I didn't move the way the other kids did. I tried to imitate them, but I just couldn't do it. I'm okay with it now, but back then I couldn't understand what was wrong."

Transition →

Provides new facts for reader

Living his entire life with cerebral palsy has given Richardson a unique perspective on life.

Quote →
Nice, detailed quote to support transition

"I've been called a lot of things. 'Cripple, idiot, retard.' Once in elementary, some kids threw rocks at me, and another time they pushed me off the slide," Richardson said. "I'm never angry with the people who tease me. I could be wrong, but I believe people should be nice to each other. Maybe if I'm nice they'll realize I'm just a normal person, too."

Sometimes comments from others still get to the freshman.

"I can tell when people are being overly nice to me," Richardson said. "Their voice gets high-pitched and they say things like I was a toddler. It makes me feel sick, like I want to throw up. If I need help, I'll ask for it. Otherwise I don't want it. I can handle my life – they don't have to try and make me feel better. At least when people tease me they're telling the truth."

Richardson takes regular and advanced classes, including three pre-AP classes this year. The freshman says he studies an average of five to six hours a night but says he often has to work harder than most of his classmates.

"Sometimes I can't get things right away," Richardson said. "It seems like other people can understand an idea or concept quickly when I have to study for a long time. It's frustrating, but feeling bad won't help me. I have to strive to be the best I can be."

Richardson has a history of academic accomplishments. He was inducted into the Junior National Honor Society at Dessau Middle School in his seventh grade year and elected president of the club. Richardson also contributes to as many community service projects as he can, and he hopes to set an example that anyone can accomplish their goals.

"My one wish is that people would be try to be nicer to each other," Richardson said. "I want the world to be better for everyone. Even if people don't think so, I can take care of myself and I can handle everything that happens to me. A lot of people are much more worse off than I am. I would wish them to have an easier life because I think my life is pretty good."

← Transition
Flows nicely from last quote to new one.

← Quote
Nice, detailed quote to support transition

← Transition
Provides bridge to new facts.

← Quote
Backs up transition.

← Transition
Provides bridge from last paragraph to next quote

← Conclusion
A final quote to wrap up the story and leave the reader with a sense of closure.

Okay, you've done the interview. You've got all the information. Now, you've got to pick out the best quotes and use them in the correct journalism style. Lost? Not sure what to do? *Aaaagggghh!* Never fear, you have the notes below to help you.

let's talk about quotes

top five things not to do

1 Don't bore readers with dull, obvious quotes.

The Homecoming Queen tells you: "I was so excited to win." *Uhhhh....that's a surprise?*

Use quotes to add color or reveal character – not to state the obvious. Also, if you could sub someone else's name, any year, then **it's not a good quote**. Quotes should be original, they should be interesting, they should give you insight into the person and their personality.

"I couldn't keep my hands from shaking. I was straining to hear the name over the loud speaker, but it was just a bunch of mumbo jumbo," senior Britney Harris said. "But then, my mom started screaming in my ear and I started screaming with her."

2 Don't have measly one sentence quotes. Get details.

Only having one sentence typically means you didn't ask enough questions to get a more detailed answer. If you can't find more answers in your interview, be prepared to go back and get more detail.

WRONG: "Basketball is my first love," junior Brynn Walken said.

RIGHT: "Basketball is my first love," junior Brynn Walken said. "I can't remember a time where I didn't have a ball in my hands. Basketball is more important to me than anything – school, friends, even my boyfriend and my family."

3 Don't quote facts.

Use the factual information from your interview for the transitions and only quote opinions, thoughts and reactions. If you don't have enough info, go back to re-interview the subject.

WRONG: "The students have practiced for hours for the Broadway show," choir director Melissa Davidson said.

RIGHT: After three weeks of two-hour daily rehearsals, the choir will showcase songs from *Hairspray* and *Chicago* Tuesday at the annual Broadway show.

"It's been brutal, but the singing and dancing is absolutely amazing," choir director Melissa Davidson said. "We're really going to shock you."

4 Never say "when asked..."

The reader will assume the source was asked the question. Don't bring yourself into the story, which happens when you say "when asked."

WRONG: When asked about her trip to Hawaii, Julie said, "It's really amazing there. The water, the beaches—everything is beautiful. I'm already planning my next trip back."

RIGHT: Laying on the beach for hours was freshman Julie Rodriguez' favorite part of her Hawaii trip.

"It's really amazing there. The water, the beaches—everything is beautiful," Rodriguez said. "I'm already planning my next trip back."

5 Don't start or end with said.

Put the attribution after the first sentence, not before it and not at the very end.

WRONG: Junior Jeremy Le said, "I have a hard time pulling myself away..."

WRONG: "I have a hard time pulling myself away from the computer. It's just so addicting. I'll be online for hours without even realizing," junior Jeremy Le said.

RIGHT: "I have a hard time pulling myself away from the computer," junior Jeremy Le said. "It's just so addicting. I'll be online for hours without even realizing."

he said... she said

Do it right. Period.

Commas and periods go inside quotation marks. After first sentence use a comma. Attribution and last sentence get periods. Don't use exclamation points. Ever.

WRONG: "I am so tired of students falling asleep in class," history teacher Jane Nguyen said, "It's so frustrating".

WRONG: "I am so tired of students falling asleep in class," history teacher Jane Nguyen said, "It's so frustrating,"

WRONG: "I am so tired of students falling asleep in class," history teacher Jane Nguyen said, "It's so frustrating!"

RIGHT: "I am so tired of students falling asleep in class," history teacher Jane Nguyen said. "It's so frustrating."

Know your spaces.

One space after a sentence. No space between opening quote mark and first word or final period and closing quote mark.

WRONG: "I am so tired of students falling asleep in class," history teacher Jane Nguyen said.

WRONG: "I am so tired of students falling asleep in class," history teacher Jane Nguyen said. "It's so frustrating,"

RIGHT: "I am so tired of students falling asleep in class," history teacher Jane Nguyen said. "It's so frustrating."

Only use said.

Not says, stated, explained, replied, expressed, laughed, giggled, commented, etc.

You're not Yoda.

Said goes last. Verbs go after nouns.

WRONG: said Lemons, said she.

RIGHT: Lemons said, she said.

It's all in the name.

On first reference, use title, full name and "said." Every future reference, only use last name.

Don't change a thing.

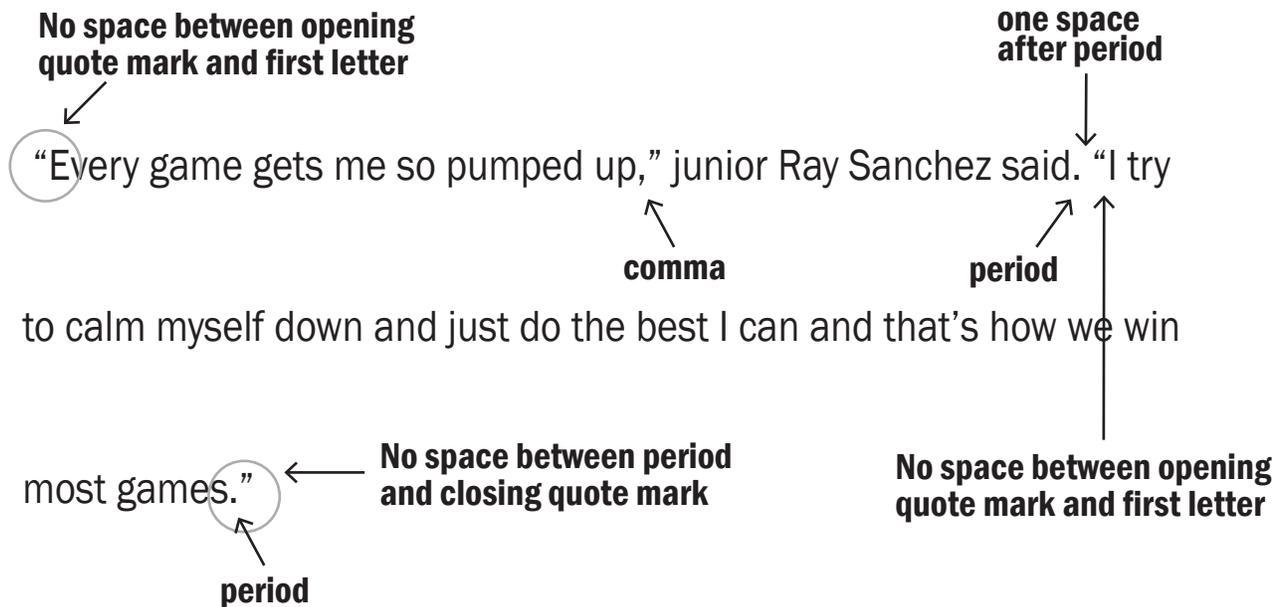
Don't change a person's quote and don't string together quotes that don't go together.

how to properly write quotes

the format

“Start with open quote marks, no space, then first sentence, comma, closed quote marks,” title firstname last name said. “Make sure only one space after periods. Start second sentence of quote, NO space between start of quote and quote mark. Have a period at end of quote, then closing quote mark.”

the example



the attribution

first reference

junior Ray Sanchez said.

↑ grade ↑ first & last name ↑ said

second & future references

Sanchez said OR she said.

↑ last name only

NEVER

said Sanchez
Sanchez says
Ray said
Ray says

Okay, you've done the interview. You've got all the information. Now, you have to decide what to quote and what to use between the quotes. The between...*that's the transitions.*

let's talk about **transitions**

what's a transition again?

Transitions are paragraphs that let the reader move logically from one thought to another. They can be as short as one sentence or several paragraphs depending on what needs to be said.

They give facts of the story.

Besides moving the reader through the story, transitions present the facts of the story, essentially giving your story weight.

"It's such a temptation," Coronado said. "I knew I could get caught. I knew what would happen if I got caught, but I didn't think it would happen."

Coronado's luck didn't last. After making her usual rounds at a shopping mall, she was stopped near the exit by a security cop. Security tapes showed her stealing merchandise and she was arrested on the spot.

"My heart was beating so hard," Coronado said. "I was really scared. When they put the handcuffs on me, I thought for sure I would go to jail for a long time. Only then could I think of the things I wish I had done instead."

Among the top sources of influence for teens to drink are the media, advertising and curiosity, according to Students Against Drunk Driving. Even though alcohol advertising alone is a \$3 billion a year business, psychologists cite peer pressure as the primary factor.

"Alcohol is everywhere on TV – even in the family shows..."

While Fontenette may not be a vocal player, her stats speak for themselves. In 36 games, the senior racked up 614 points, 211 rebounds, 161 steals and 128 assists. The senior added several awards this year, including being named Most Valuable Player for two tournaments, a nomination for the McDonald's Player All-American team, Texas Association of Basketball Coaches All-State team and the Austin American-Statesman's player of the year.

"I will always remember playing in the Powder Puff game," she said. "It was a lot of fun and I loved bonding with all the senior girls. It's a really great tradition to start."

Female bonding wasn't the only thing achieved. Student Council raised \$1400 from the game and other Homecoming activities while the senior class earned money from the game concessions.

Guerra, who took about two and a half weeks to complete her drawing, was honored at a reception, Oct. 28.

(Notice a who clause with commas was used to combine two facts together.)

They paraphrase bad or partial quotes.

Parts of your interview won't work as quotes. But the information is still important for the story. Use it for the quotes.

Garcia says, after his arrest, he didn't deal drugs as often as he had before. He's now trying to find a legal job, but it's difficult for him. His permanent record is scarred.

"Teenagers don't know when they're playing in the big leagues," Tupper said. "They turn against authority figures in an effort to define who they are. People think teenagers are reckless now, but..."

Smith doesn't plan to stop drinking anytime soon. She'll still be at a friend's party or her college-aged boyfriend's apartment, drowning her worries with Jell-O shots and white Russians. She'll still be one of the 24 percent of teenagers who feel they can get into a car after having more than a few drinks. She'll still say she knows her limits.

"Drinking is not thought of as this taboo thing, this crime, for teenagers because so many of us do it," Smith said. "Maybe if..."

They allow us to introduce new speakers and move to a new thought in story.

Playing off the last quote, using some of the wording or thought helps introduce the next quote.

But Dawson isn't the first teenager to engage in risky behavior. From taking her mother's car to shoplifting at her favorite stores, senior Ashley Coronado has also suffered the consequences of a bad decision.

Sophomore Earnest Sanchez* also knows the drug world. He was pulled over for speeding and the police officer smelled marijuana in the car. Sanchez was arrested, forced to pay a \$700 fine and then sentenced to Gardner Betts Juvenile Detention Center for four months with another four months of probation.

"When the phone rang, the first thought through my head was 'Oh my God'," Carlson said. "I tried to think of excuses of why PISD would be calling at 7 o'clock at night. I knew I had messed up."

But many skipping junkies are not as lucky getting pass the front doors of the school building. The school has a database that keeps track of student's attendance, period by period.

"At any given time, we can look up a student's schedule..."

Sources: Hawthorne, Bobby. Teacher's Writing Handbook. Lemons, Kelly. Connally High School Journalism, 2008. Stories from 2007-08 Governor and The Connection, Connally High School.

Okay, you've done the interview. You've got all the information. Now, you have to decide what to quote and what to use between the quotes. The between...*that's the transitions.*

let's talk about transitions

top four things not to do

1 Don't say "You" or "I" or "we" in transition.

WRONG: You may know him from hearing the morning announcements or seeing the latest play. Senior Johnny Bender readily admits he's a ham.

WRONG: I met him auditioning for the One-Act Play.

RIGHT: Bender, a regular on the morning announcements, admits he's a ham. He says even off stage, he can't help but put on an act.

2 Don't put any opinion. Leave that for the quotes.

You can't put any opinion in your transitions and fact paragraphs. You can't comment, critique or cheerlead, not even the slightest hint of opinion. You can always get that opinion in a quote from someone. Transitions should be the facts and paraphrased quotes attributed to the source.

WRONG: The Cougars played a tough battle against the Hawks Friday night.

RIGHT: The Cougars kept the Hawks scoreless until the fourth quarter when receiver Jeremy Davis caught a 12-yard touchdown pass. "It was a tough battle," senior Jared Lawrence said. "The defense was trying everything to keep them out of the end zone."

3 Don't rehash what a quote says.

WRONG: Cornerstone Academy teacher Lisa Madras says she's excited to work with the 600 new freshmen.

"I'm so excited to be part of the academy," Madras said.

RIGHT: Algebra I teacher Lisa Madras is one of the 25 teachers part of the Cornerstone Academy. She will be part of Team 4, which includes 175 of the 600 freshmen.

"I'm so excited to be part of the academy," Madras said. "I know this will make the difference in our math scores this year."

4 Don't make ambiguous statements not supported by fact.

Just because you think it, doesn't mean it's actually true. Unless you polled the whole school, stay away from ambiguous statements and words (Everyone, most, some). Attribute every statement to a person, an organization or survey results.

WRONG: Everyone knows smoking is bad for you.

WRONG: Most students hate the five-minute passing periods.

RIGHT: The American Cancer Society, which has studied the effects of smoking for 30 years, says teenagers often ignore the long term consequences because they believe they can easily quit.

RIGHT: More than 80 percent of students dislike the five-minute passing periods, according to a recent *Connection* survey.

helpful hints

■ The transition **MUST** have it's own paragraph. You **CANNOT** combine a quote and a transition in the same graf.

■ Follow quote/transition formula. Don't stack two quotes together or two transitions together.

■ To avoid repeating person's name numerous times, use other nouns or pronouns to describe the person, i.e. he/she, the sophomore, the senior English teacher, the defending state champion, etc.

transition words

Transition words help more readers through the story, letting them know there is a change in thought. They can show time, cite examples, indicate emphasis and show viewpoints.

Show Time	Cite Example	Show viewpoint
Then	For instance	However
Meanwhile	Thus	But
Shortly there-after	For example	Nevertheless
After	To illustrate	Also
Afterwards	Specifically	Seriously
Now	In fact	In another way
Later		In a lighter view
Soon	Indicate emphasis	In addition
All this time	Indeed	In general
Formerly	Moreover	Yet
Previously	To illustrate	Besides
At last	Especially	Not only
Finally	In addition to	Though
Eventually	Similarly	In other words
First	Furthermore	On the contrary
While	Rather	On the other hand
Beyond	Therefore	Likewise
Next	Indeed	Despite
Again	Still	In contrast

transitions words at work

Show time

"The reason I don't boast about what I have is because I know what it is like to have nothing," Olivarez said. "When I help my dad out he pays me \$20 or \$30, but if I'm lazy I'm out of luck."

Now, the value of hard work is prominent in Olivarez's life, so much that he hopes to follow in his father's footsteps.

Indicate emphasis

In addition to performing, the group was able to interact with high school students from all over the U.S. and around the world at the workshops the festival offered.

Show viewpoint

Despite the lost, Chatmon enjoyed the experience.