

Writing a Press Release

A press release is written to alert the media to a story and convince them that it's newsworthy.

Tips:

- **Make sure your story really is newsworthy.** Establish yourself as a reliable source by thinking like a journalist - will this story interest the audience?
- **Always write in the third person.** Remember that that most news stories aim to be objective reports. With the exception of quotes from sources, a press release should be written entirely in the third person.
- **Be brief.** Keep most paragraphs to between three and five concise sentences. The release itself should be between half a page and two pages, with one page being the ideal length.
- **Follow the format.** Your press release needs to look like a press release or it won't be picked up.
- **Grab their attention with a good headline.** The headline should be catchy and summarize the content of the release in 6-8 words.
- **Begin with a bang.** Remember that newspaper writing calls for information to be organized like an inverted pyramid: the most important information at the beginning, the less important details towards the end. The beginning of the article is what's most likely to be read.
- **The first paragraph** should briefly recount the who, what, when, where, why, and how of your story.
- **Subsequent paragraphs** should supply the details and support the information given in the headline and first paragraph.
- **The last paragraph** should briefly profile your organization.
- **Edit and proofread.** Pay attention to grammar and spelling. Get a friend or colleague to read over your op-ed before it's submitted.
- **Remember: a good press release could be published as sent.** While reporters are used to weaving releases into articles, regional and community papers often simply print as is, keeping you in control of your message.