

Guide to Article Writing

*This initiative is an outstanding opportunity to share your knowledge.
Take advantage of it. Best of luck with your writing!*

Publication standards

Please make sure to comply with all of the criteria outlined below before submitting your article.

Expected length

From 775 to 825 words.

Structure

The structure of a science popularization article follows the principles of the so-called inverted pyramid. But what is meant by that? A popularization article should invert the classic expository structure (introduction, development, conclusion) and start with the basics of the topic being covered. You then develop your topic in the following paragraphs. The conclusion, meanwhile, should be open-ended.

Your text must therefore respect the following structure:

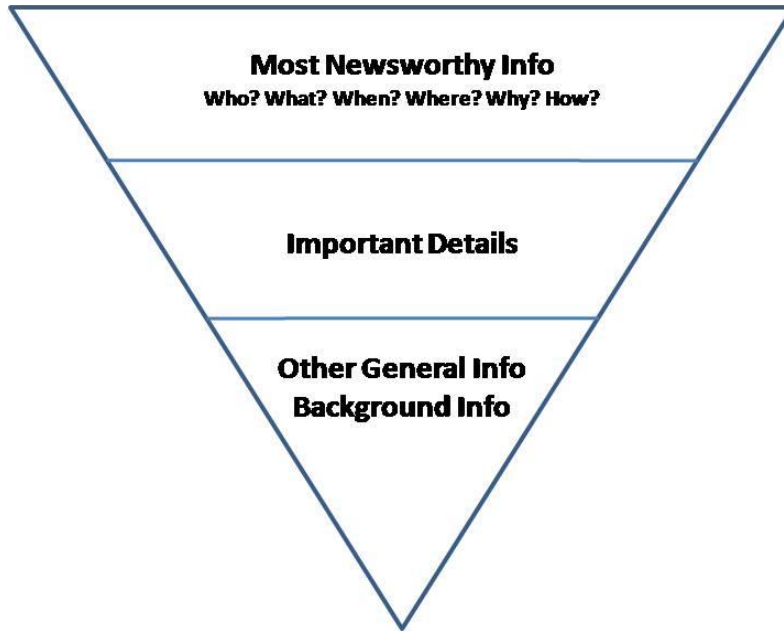
Title (in bold)

Subhead (in bold)

Lead (heart of the subject)

Explanatory paragraphs

Introduction/conclusion



Concept of the inverted pyramid (Source: Wikimedia Commons)

Also, keep in mind that your text is meant for readers who are not specialists in your field. That means avoiding the jargon specific to it. Furthermore, the main purpose of a popularization article is to inform, not to persuade, so you must, as far as is possible, avoid using superlatives and giving your opinion. Make sure you place the subject in context—this helps pique your readers' curiosity.

Also pay close attention to the following:

Keep the title short (maximum 7 words)

Your title must be interesting and intriguing to your readers, be informative by summarizing the core aspects of your project, and employ imagery and a punchy style. In addition, your title must complete the expression "Digital intelligence to. . ." (i.e., it must begin with an imperative verb).

Compose a compelling subhead (one or two sentences)

The lead is the introductory paragraph to your article. It must announce the subject and, ideally, cover the "Five Ws" (**Who** is directly concerned? **What** is being discussed? **Where** and **When** is the project / field of study being conducted? **Why** is this an important subject for discussion?)

Simply reading the title and the lead should be enough for the reader to grasp the subject of the article and its main conclusions.

Lead

The lead is the first paragraph of the text, just after the subhead; its goal is to “hook” the reader into continuing. It contextualizes the main idea (see paragraph on the angle) by either:

Setting an atmosphere

For example:

Absolute darkness, cold temperature, unheard-of pressure: the ocean floor is a hostile habitat.

Or mentioning an eloquent statistic or a fact that piques the reader’s interest

For example:

I am the heaviest organ in the human body, weighing three kilos. I am. . . your skin.

They were thought to have been wiped out by an asteroid. Yet millions of years later, the descendants of the T. rex are still very much alive.

Or beginning a narrative

For example:

In the late afternoon of December 31, Dr. Michael E. DeBakey, 97, was alone in his Houston home, in his office, busy preparing for a lecture. Suddenly, an intense pain ran down his chest, then worked its way back up to his neck. Dr. DeBakey, one of the most influential surgeons in history, feared that his heart would stop within seconds.

Have a well-defined angle

The angle is THE most effective/interesting/original way of explaining your research project in your own words. This means you should ask yourself what your target audience (the [extended IVADO community](#) and members of the public interested in digital intelligence) would want to know, and which aspect of your research project (e.g., economic, social, scientific) is most likely to interest them. Focusing on just one aspect of your research project will make your article easier to write as well as allow you to go into greater depth.

If your angle is well defined, you should be able to summarize your article in a single, clear, short sentence containing no commas (the main thrust).



Writing standards

To draw the reader in, give concrete examples that illustrate your statements, follow the throughline linking your topic and the general public (focus on the “people” aspect of your project), offer analogies, and include one or more telling statistics.

- Whenever possible, use [inclusive, gender-neutral writing](#).
- Start your text with the core of your subject. In a popularization article, the most important points (the core) are mentioned at the beginning, with the less important ones covered later on.
- Make specific mention of your research project within the first few paragraphs of your text, right after the lead.
- Ideally, your article should not include any references at the end. Instead, you should include all information directly in the text of the article (e.g., “A report by XX stipulates YY. . .”)
- Feel free to include hyperlinks when you consider it useful.

If your article is selected for publication, you must supply a passport-format photo of you to accompany it. The photo must be high-resolution (at least 300dpi) and have a uniform background.

Some useful resources

[*A Field Guide for Science Writers: The Official Guide of the National Association of Science Writers*](#) by Deborah Blum, Mary Knudson and Robin Marantz Henig

[*Dire*](#), science writing journal, Université de Montréal (FICSUM)

[*Écrire pour être lu*](#) by Marie-Paule Primeau

[*Guide de rédaction d'un article de vulgarisation*](#) by Gilles Provost

[*Guide de vulgarisation*](#) by Pascal Lapointe

[*Guide pratique de vulgarisation scientifique*](#) by Sophie Malavoy

[*Ideas into Words: Mastering the Craft of Science Writing*](#) by Élise Hancock

[*La synthèse*](#), student journal on science writing (INRS)

[*Le métier de journaliste*](#) by Pierre Sormany

[*The Science Writers' Handbook*](#) by SciLance