The inverted pyramid is a style of newswriting in which the main facts go at the top of the story, in the lead. The facts become less significant until, toward the bottom of the body, they may be dispensable. This gives the reader the essential facts first and permits expansion or contraction in editing and page layout.

THE LEAD
The lead of a news story is one or more sentences (about 25 words) that summarize the story, usually by answering the questions who, what, when, where, why, and how.

THE BODY
The body of the news story is the part that gives the details of timeliness, proximity, prominence, consequence, human interest, and conflict. The body consists of quotations and transitions.
The body of a news story

The body of a news story consists of quotations and transitions in alternating form. Including the lead, this is known as the LQT (lead, quote, transition) format for a news story and is a simple style to write. As indicated below, transitions serve three functions, all of which are based on having good, information-filled quotations.

**THE TRANSITION**

Writers should have three goals when writing transitions: to add information, to explain, and to help the story flow. In the body of the news story, writers should generally alternate between quotations and transitions.

**THE QUOTATION**

Quotations come in two types: indirect and direct. Direct quotations are those which retain the exact wording of the source. Indirect quotations allow for some changes in wording but retain the meaning of the original quotation.
The **LEAD** is the first paragraph in a news story. It contains the most important information in the story. Even if the reader reads only this one paragraph, he or she should get the essential information about the event the story covers.

**How does a reporter choose the most important information to put in the lead?**

1. Remember that news is timely. Often, the most recent information is the most important.

2. An old reporter’s trick is to answer the five W’s and the H: who, what, when, where, why, and how? The lead doesn’t need to include all six, but answering these questions helps the reporter identify the most important information. The who and what are almost always in the lead. The when and where are usually in the lead. The why and how are often saved for later.

**Other characteristics of a good lead:**

1. Use active voice. The subject of the sentence should do the action of the verb. (This applies to the rest of the story, too.)

2. Keep the lead short. 30 to 35 words maximum. Fewer is okay.

3. Make the lead one sentence.

4. Don’t start the lead with the where or when. If you do, all leads end up sounding the same.

5. Use proper names only if they are easily recognizable to most readers. A famous name in a lead increases the likelihood that readers will check out the story. An obscure name discourages reader interest.

A headline tells you what an article is generally about, but it doesn't give you very much more information than that. For this reason, you will need to look at the article itself, the news story, to get all the facts you may want to know.

It is easy to find the most important facts in a news story because news-writers usually put them in the first paragraph of an article. This first paragraph is called the lead or lead paragraph. Sometimes the lead is only one sentence in length. Often it carries a dateline (see page 12), which tells where and when the story was written.

Who? What? When? Where? Why? How? These are the questions the reporter tries to answer for you in the lead paragraph. If you can get the answers to these questions, then you will know what the article is all about. You will also know whether or not you want to read on to find out even more about the story.

Here is the lead paragraph from a news story. Read it carefully. Then look at the way this news story answers the most important questions.

Sixty-five persons were injured yesterday when an explosion, caused by natural gas, rocked the downtown business district, blowing out one side of a 20-story office building from top to bottom. The blast also wrecked many rooms in an adjoining hotel and showered glass and other debris over the area.

1. Who is the story about?
   sixty-five persons

2. What happened to them?
   They were injured.

3. When did it happen?
   yesterday

4. Where did it happen?
   in the downtown business district

5. Why or how did it happen?
   An explosion blew out the side of an office building.

WORDS YOU MAY NOT KNOW

| injured | hurt   | adjoining | next door |
| explosion | a bursting with a loud noise | debris | what remains after something is destroyed |
| rocked | shook |
Each year, the Texas Music Educators Association (TMEA) hosts a convention at which hundreds of high school musicians sing and play. Individuals who have been selected to the top-level of competition are eligible to perform in the All-State Band, All-State Orchestra or All-State Choir. These groups rehearse for only one week prior to the convention.

In addition, other groups are selected to perform for the band, choir and orchestra directors, musicians and vendors of music-related items attending the conference, Feb. 22-24 in San Antonio.

This year, the MacArthur High School Orchestra, directed by Tanya Garverick, was one of the 15 groups selected to perform on Feb. 23 at a clinic by Barry Green on musical theory. Green, the author of The Inner Game of Music, is the principal bass player of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and is Professor of Music at the University of Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music.

Rebekha Peeples, sophomore
Mrs. Garverick told us we were picked because we've won so many awards, both as a group and as individuals. I think it is a neat experience to be with so many talented musicians.

Tanya Garverick, MacArthur H.S. Orchestra Director
Barry Green is one of the great music theorists in the nation. I attended one of his seminars on the Inner Game of Music and learned how to be a better teacher and a better musician. The people who attend his session will learn a lot, but, more importantly, my orchestra students will learn that they are great musicians. Music is a very personal thing and it's nice to be able to share it with other people. This will be not only an educational experience but will be fun as well.

Erin Amendola, senior
It's great working with such incredible talent. I'll never stop learning from this experience. We're learning some music now that has never before been performed.

Andrew Paparella, senior
It will be a real honor to work with Barry Green. Mrs. Garverick's motivation has gotten us where we are today.

The MacArthur High School Orchestra has 50 string students plus 25 wind and percussion members. MacArthur High School has 1,500 students in grades 9-12.
The sample news story

Here's a copy of the story as it ran in the Brahma Tales.

**Orchestra performs for state music educators' convention**

by Emily Okaty
Center Spread Editor

The Mac symphony was a guest at the Texas Music Educators Association (TMEA).

"I think it is a neat experience to be with so many talented musicians," sophomore Rebekah Peeples said. The orchestra, composed of 50 string students plus 25 winds and percussion members who are selected from the Mac Band, participated in the TMEA convention as a part of Mr. Barry Green's demonstration of theories in his new book The Inner Game of Music. Mr. Green is the principle bass player of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra. He is also Professor of Music at the University of Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music, where he conducts Inner Game Seminars.

"It was great working with such incredible talent," Senior Erin Amendola said, "I'll never stop learning from this experience."

Mr. Green went through various teaching techniques during the seminar. The symphony was exposed to new ideas and the honor of playing music not yet published.

The symphony was picked for their known music ability as proved through competitions. The orchestra has been a consistent sweepstakes winner in music competitions, both as full orchestra.

The TMEA experience was not only educational, but fun; as proved through the light hearted conducting, teaching, applauding and even student juggling by Joel Anderson, Brian Putsche, and Ken McClintock.

"It was a real honor to work with Barry Green," said Andrew Paparella, senior. "Mrs. Garverick's motivation has gotten us where we are today."
Model 13.2

Headline checklist

When writing headlines, observe the following guidelines.

DID YOU:

• **Leave out a, an and the**
  
  **OK** Student Council plans retreat
  
  **Not** The Student Council plans a retreat

• **Use present tense**
  
  **OK** Longhorns defeat Aggies
  
  **Not** Longhorns defeated Aggies

• **Use a comma in place of “and”**
  
  **OK** Band, choir win sweepstakes award
  
  **Not** Band and choir win sweepstakes award

• **Use a semicolon to separate complete thoughts**
  
  **OK** Legislature in session; future of education in doubt
  
  **Not** Legislature in session. Future of education in doubt

• **Keep verbs all on one line**
  
  **OK** Winning journalists
to travel into rainforest
  
  **Not** Winning journalists to travel into rainforest

• **Keep adjectives and their nouns on the same line**
  
  **OK** Workers want more say
  on environmental issues
  
  **Not** Workers want more
  say on environmental issues

• **Use active verbs; omit forms of the verb be**
  
  **OK** Survey reveals smoking common
  
  **Not** Smoking is common, survey shows

• **Use alliteration sparingly (It gets old fast.)**
  
  **MAYBE** Special students to save school Saturday
  
  **MAYBE** Budget battle baffles Board