

STORY BLUEPRINTS
~ structures for
sound storytelling ~



Blueprints for WRITERS ~

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FOUR BUCKETS

1. Primary stuff

News makers, necessary info and experts

2. Reactionary stuff

Those affected; needed comment or response

3. Contextual stuff

Background, history, broader view, relevance

4. Cool stuff

Color, description, scene, character

NEW AGE INVERTED PYRAMID

- Prioritize and synthesize the news
- Summarize context, scope, significance (nut graf)
- Return to the news, writing quickly in prioritized order

SUMMARY NUT LEDE
News
Context
Significance, Scope, Impact

Anchor quote
General attribution

Transition to what's to come

NEWS BIT

NEWS BIT

NEWS BIT

NEWS BIT

NEWS BIT

NEWS TOTEM

- INVERTED PYRAMID BUT WITH NEWS SUB-ITEMS THAT CAN'T BE EASILY PRIORITIZED IN A DESCENDING HIERARCHY
- LEDE & NUT GRAF: INCLUDES MENTION OF ALL KEY SUB-ITEMS
- THEN SUB-ITEMS OF NEWS EXPANDED ON ONE BY ONE

LEDE

SUMMARY NUT

News

Context

Significance, Scope, Impact

Anchor quote

General attribution

Transition to what's to come

NEWS BIT

NEWS BIT

NEWS BIT

NEWS BIT

NEWS BIT

BREAKING NEWS WITH BACKSTORY

- STRUCTURE THAT ALLOWS QUICK NEWS/NUT SUMMARY TOP, THEN TELLS REST OF THE STORY CHRONOLOGICALLY OR BY HIERARCHICAL TOPIC

SUMMARY NUT LEDE
News
Context
Significance, Scope, Impact

Anchor quote
General attribution

Transition to what's to come

START AT THE BEGINNING

CONTINUE CHRONOLOGY

NEXT/ BUILDING CHRONO OR TENSION

NEXT/ KEEP BUILDING

KICKER

BROKEN NARRATIVE

WEAVE NARRATIVE (movement,
action, scene, detail, character)

WITH EXPOSITION (context,
backstory, significance, nut
material)

3/2 or VARIATION

OPEN NARRATIVE

EXPOSITION / BACKSTORY / CONTEXT / NUT

RETURN TO NARRATIVE

EXPOSITION / BACKSTORY / CONTEXT

END NARRATIVE

WALL STREET JOURNAL MODIFIED STRUCTURE

- ◆ LEDE (THAT HITS CENTER OF STORY: EITHER SUMMARY NUT FOR NEWS ENTERPRISE OR TIGHT ANECDOTE/SCENE FOR FEATURE)
- ◆ SUMMARY NUT THAT OUTLINES SIGNIFICANCE, SCOPE AND CONTEXT
 - ◆ SUMMARY NUT EXPANSION: SUMMARIZES RANGE OF DEBATE OR HIGHLIGHTS KEY ISSUES IN THE STORY
- ◆ BODY OF STORY WRITTEN IN SECTIONS THAT EACH EXPAND ON ONE OF THE KEY ISSUES

LEDE

SUMMARY NUT 1

SUMMARY NUT 2

TO BE SURE

SEGUE

ANCHOR QUOTE

SET UP STORY

Now tell your story, a chapter or section at a time, by scene, topic or a back-and-forth of both.

SECTION OR TOPIC 1

SECTION OR TOPIC 2

SECTION OR TOPIC 3

SECTION OR TOPIC 4

LAST CHAPTER OR END

STEPHEN SPIELBERG MEETS THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

- ◆ THINK CINEMATICALLY: THINK IN SCENES (OR CHAPTERS)
- ◆ CHAPTERS (SECTIONS) FOR SCENES, TOPICS OR A COMBO OF BOTH
 - ◆ VARY SIZE AND PACING AND VOICE OF CHAPTERS
- ◆ CAN WORK EQUALLY FOR ISSUES PIECES, PROFILES, NARRATIVES
- ◆ CAN BE EXPANDED BROKEN NARRATIVE

LEDE

ELEGANT SUMMARY NUT / FORESHADOW

HINT OF NEWS OR CONTEXT

SEGUE

SET UP STORY

CHAPTER OR SCENE

EXPOSITION OR BACKSTORY OR BRIDGE

CHAPTER OR SCENE

EXPOSITION OR BACKSTORY OR BRIDGE

CHAPTER OR SCENE

EXPOSITION OR BACKSTORY OR BRIDGE

LAST CHAPTER OR END

RETURN TO PRESENT OR CLOSE THE LOOP OR SET UP THE FUTURE

