

**daventryhouse**

consultancy in technology management and communication from Neil Rathbone

# Journalistic writing style

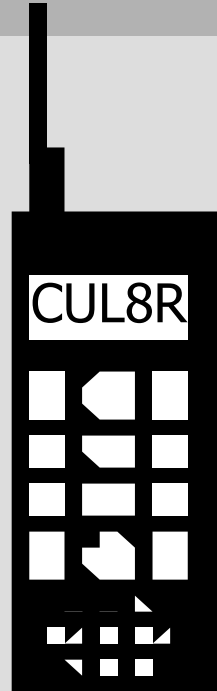
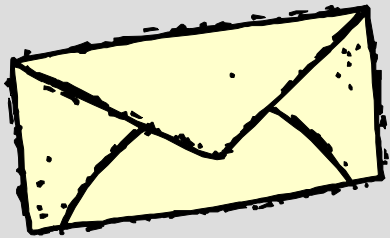
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More than just  
writing...

# Styles of writing




**Dragonflies**

Dragonfly - The dragonfly is a fascinating and much photographed insect. In its common stage, it has a body of light and dark brown, a slender neck, a slender body, and legs, its wings ranging from 50 to 100 mm. While in flight, dragonflies keep their upper forewings in a steady position, while the lower wings are held close to the body. Dragonflies feed on other insects as they fly in flight. You might see a dragonfly flying against a tree or a bush. Dragonflies also come in flight. After mating, the female dragonfly will deposit her eggs in the water. The baby dragonfly, called nymph, hatches within one to three weeks and continues to live in the water for up to two years. The nymphs resemble smaller fish and insects, using hooks on their legs and they breathe using gills.




**Moths and Butterflies**



Moths - Moths are long-lived butterflies, but they are mostly nocturnal. While most butterflies feed on flowers or flowers in the day, moths are night creatures and usually feed on flowers that bloom at night. Moths also have a unique ability to fly at night and fold wings against the body when not in flight. Moths are most common in the night. Moths are also used for raising crops and clothes, some species are harmful to humans. 800,000,000 species of moths found in China has been used in production for more than 4,000 years. Workers obtain the silk from the moth's cocoon.



**Ladybugs** - A ladybug is a type of beetle with a distinctive pattern of spots on its back. Ladybugs are often used as a natural pest control in agriculture. They are also used in biological research. Ladybugs come in many colors, including red, black, and white. They are also used in biological research. Ladybugs are often used as a natural pest control in agriculture. They are also used in biological research. Ladybugs come in many colors, including red, black, and white. They are also used in biological research.



**Termites** - Termites are the biggest and perhaps fiercest of all insects. Like other insects, they have six legs, compound eyes, and antennae. They kill their prey by injecting them with secretions that they use to feed. Termites, in general, live in colonies and are known for their ability to build large mounds of earth. They are also known for their ability to eat wood.





# Journalism

1. Takes an angle (always)
2. Browsable
3. Readable
4. Tuned to its audience

# 1. Taking an angle

# Taking an angle

My glass is half full

My glass is half empty

# Taking an angle

Troops advance 10 miles

Troop advance stopped after 10 miles

# Taking an angle

Victorious allies push forward 10 miles

Enemy push fails after just 10 miles

# Taking an angle

*The army of the Peoples Republic of Xyzbia led by General Sir George Melchett DSO DFC and bar, on the occasion of an initiative of the Advisory Panel For War, having ascertained the optimum timing, made a preliminary perambulation consisting of 9.87 miles in the direction of the enemy.....*

# Taking an angle

- Fuel cell demonstration receives cool reception
- Will fuel cells ever catch on?
- Technical breakthrough sparks new hope for fuel cells
- Fuel cells triumph sets new standards

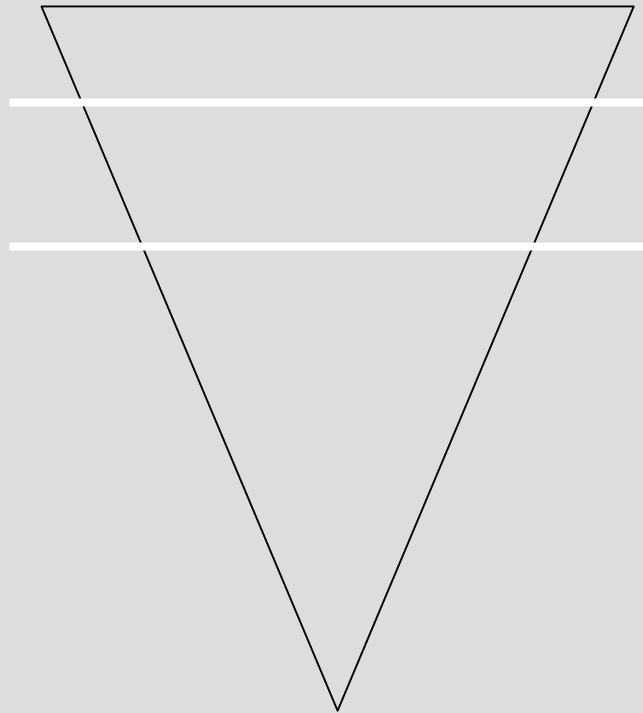
# Taking an angle

- Must be consistent throughout the story
- Should suit the audience viewpoint



## 2. Browsable

# Browsable - Pyramid writing



Headline

Paragraph 1

Rest

# Browsable - Pyramid writing

Re-tell the whole story several times  
increasing the depth as you go

# Browsable - Pyramid writing

## LOCAL MAN BITES DOG

A Melton dog is recovering in St Mary's hospital after being bitten on the nose by a rabid man.

The incident took place at the Mash Tub on new years' eve when a Mr K Nine, of 123 the crescent, having had too much to drink, was so annoyed by a neighbour's Scottie dog called Whisky that he bit it on the nose.

Following the attack .....

# Browsable - Headlining

- Spill the beans – no labels, no cryptic clues
- Include as many ‘hooks’ as possible (in captions and insets if available)
- Active ‘Subject Verb Object’ format (but not necessarily in the right order)

# Browsable - Headlining

*“Breakthrough in genetic screening means healthier sheep for upland farmers” (says DNA Expert)*

# Browsable - Headlining

Ford launches new car

Ford struggles with new car launch

Government request

Government seeks import ban on fireworks

Fuel Cells research praised

Dot Cotton praises fuel cell research

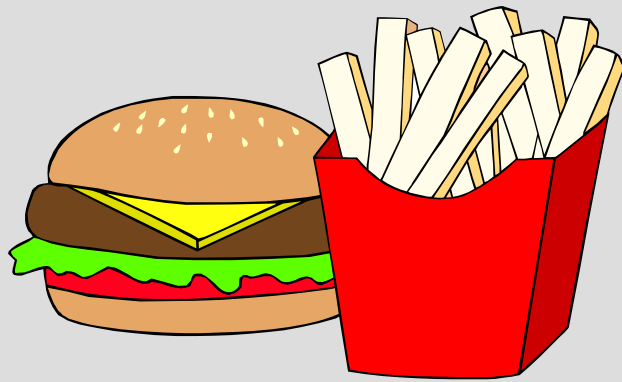
Cheadle stunned by shock council decision

## Headlining practice

“Yes, I’ve always been lucky,  
but I’ve noticed that the more  
I practice the luckier I get”

## Headlining practice

1. Find your angle
2. Write a headline that tells the story
3. Start a first paragraph



## 3. Readable

# Readable - *Essence* not a Précis

- Selective
- Emphasise the important
- Flow and readability paramount

# Readable - Simplification

- Context funnel
- Replacement of technical words
- Explanation of technical words
- Omission of irrelevant and 'agenda' material
- Short sentences
- 'Human interest' breaks

# Readable - The context funnel

Universe

Galaxy

Star

Planet

Country

Town

House

Room



## 4. Tuned to the audience

# Tuned - The target audience

- Industry?
- Researchers?
- Intermediaries?
- Public sector/NGOs?

# Tuned – Editorial policy

- Stated policy?
  - Fuel Cells Forum newsletter:
    - To encourage contact and collaboration in the interests of UK players
  - Therefore:
    - Requests for partnerships, funding bids, product offerings

# Tuned - 'EuroEnglish?'

- No colloquialisms
- No metaphors
- No long words
- No plays on words
- Simple grammar not necessarily 'English'  
English grammar

# Tuned - Jargon

- Flux = flow
- Pyrolysis = burning
- ...but it turned out that the device was subject to environmental stresses that were too severe during high winds..... =  
.....it blew over

# Tuned - Entertaining

- Information
- News
- Gossip
- Education
- Humour

# Practice makes.....

Take the examples provided and:

- ◆ Read and understand
- ◆ Find your angle
- ◆ Wordsmith (write/cut-and-paste)
- ◆ Put a headline

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