

At the Event

- Bring a pen, and an extra pen, along with some paper.
- Take basic notes during the event. If something happens, jot down the details about it. (If there was a school game, for example, describe how the players played, some of the exciting moments and note who scored).
- Note the names of the main organizers and describe what they did. Include other volunteers and people – don't forget the quiet people who work behind the scenes.
- How were students and others acting at the event – were they laughing? Stunned into silence? Busy? Describe their reactions.



Getting Started

KISS Rule – *Keep It Short and Simple*



- The newspaper has limited space for reports. Aim for one-two short sentences per paragraph; and about six paragraphs for a 300-word story.
- Open with the most exciting and interesting thing in your story – the lead.
- If you are wondering how to start, think about the biggest news and most positive part. How? Imagine one of your friends couldn't make it and you phoned or texted to tell them about it. What would you say first? ("We just made \$500 fundraising", "Our team won the game", "The talent show was awesome – we have so many talented students at our school").
- Sometimes saying it out loud helps you find the words to use in your writing.

Try not to use leads like *"There was a fun fair held at Saseenos last month"*. Talk about *what happened, who was there, where and when it was*.

DO use the five (or four) Ws – What, Where, When, Who (Why) – and How.

Examples of starting paragraphs:

Ecole Poirier students showed, once again, that they have an amazing range of talent. From Belle Singer's cover of Adele's "Set Fire to the Rain" to Joe King's hilarious impressions of our teachers, the audience went from laughing, to tears, to explosions of applause during the annual talent show held May16th.

The Grade Five students in Ms. Prissy's class have been working hard to raise funds for a trip to Science World. Students in Sooke colours will be outside the local grocery stores selling chocolate on Saturday, Apr. 20 from 10am – 2pm.

Write in the style you are comfortable in – maybe it’s humorous, or just the facts, or you want to raise awareness of an important issue. What is your style? _____.

The Rest of the Story

You’ve got your first paragraph, now what next? The rest of the story (the body) includes all the details you need to fill out your article – dates, places, names.

DO include quotes from the people you are reporting about.

HINT: try not to always mention the same people in every story. Find ways to highlight as many of your classmates as possible.

Example of quote and further details:

“Look for us in blue and gold,” said fundraising committee member Sasha Keener. The students will be travelling to Vancouver on June 6th.

You may have a number of activities you will want to report on:

In other news, the boys’ basketball team won against Metchosin Elementary in an exciting close game on April 4. The visitors started strong with the first points on the board, but John Muir’s boys answered them all. It looked tough for us when Watt Ashot, who had scored 12 points so far, twisted his ankle. Then Ben Schwärmer, who hadn’t scored all season, picked up the ball and nailed a two-handed shot from the centre line getting his first goal of the season and the win for John Muir.

The Grade Two students have been enjoying the annual swim program that began this month, sponsored by the Sooke Lions Club. Every year, Grade Two students at all Sooke schools get to participate in swimming lessons at SEAPARC, with a big thanks to the generous sponsorship of the Sooke Lions.

Wrapping up:

If you are reporting on a number of activities, you can use a simple closing line that looks ahead to what will be happening next month. You could even say something like “It’s been a very busy month”.

If there’s not enough space, it’s OK if there is no “conclusion” in a news story.

To polish your article when you are done, read it aloud and see how it sounds. Check for typos and spelling, add your byline and see if you are following newspaper style.

Newspaper style

You’ve written your article. Now what? Double check to make sure you follow some basic style rules of newspaper reporting.

Names

- Include the first and last name of a student in their first mention in a report. Just use the last name only on subsequent mentions.
- Make sure names are spelled correctly. Nothing is more thrilling than seeing your name in the paper – but it’s a big disappointment if it’s spelled wrong. HINT: If you are talking to someone, ask them right away how they spell their name if you don’t know.

Numbers

- Write out numbers from one to nine; use numerals for numbers 10, 11, 12 and higher.

Sending your story

Congratulations! You have covered and written your story. Time to send it in.

Meet the deadline

- Know the deadline to submit your finished story. Write it here: _____.
- Send to: _____.

Other ideas

You can use these tips for writing for a number of publications.

Where could you publish your work and practice writing?

1. Local newspaper
2. School newsletter
3. School blog

Good luck and have fun!