

Chapter 10 Journalism Today

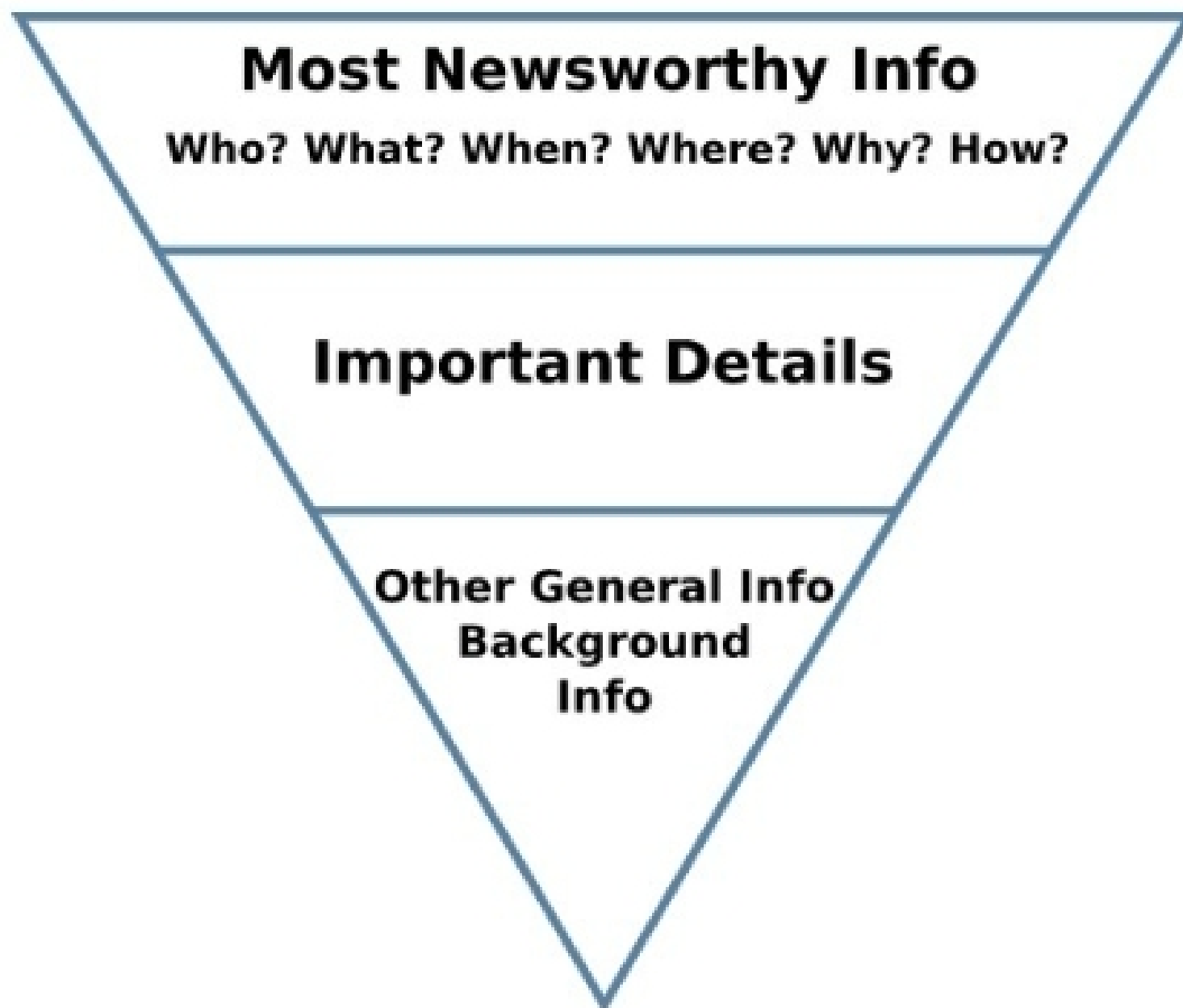
The Body of a News Story

- Body - The portion of a news story that follows the lead
 - Contains the information a reporter believes readers need to know

- Train track analogy

The Inverted-Pyramid Style

- Inverted-pyramid stories arrange the information in descending order of importance or newsworthiness.
 - Lead - Summarizes the story; states most newsworthy info
 - Second paragraph - Provides details to amplify the lead
- Inverted pyramid allows someone to stop reading a story after only one or two paragraphs



- These strategies are used if the story may be too long. Less important information is left at the end to be cut if there is not enough room.

Writing the Second Paragraph

- Like the lead, the second paragraph should emphasize the news
- Avoid leapfrogging
 - To avoid this, provide a one- or two-word transition from the lead to the name in the second paragraph
- Continue with the news
 - After providing a smooth transition between the lead and the second paragraph, continue with information about the topic summarized in your lead.
- Names, names -- Dull, dull
 - Don't put too much emphasis on identifying the characters involved
- Background: Too much, too soon
 - Avoid devoting the entire second paragraph to background information

Complex Stories

- Stories that contain several major subtopics may be too complex to summarize in a brief lead
- Reporters often use lists in news stories that involve several ideas, subtopics or examples
- Each item in a list must be in parallel form
- Reporters also use lists to summarize less important details placed at the end of a news story

The Hourglass Style

- Combines the strengths of the inverted pyramid and the narrative format
- Has three parts:
 - Inverted pyramid top that summarizes the most newsworthy information
 - Turn/pivot paragraph - Makes the transition between top and bottom
 - Narrative - Allows writer to develop the story in depth and detail
- Does not make sense for stories that have no meaningful chronology

The Focus Style

- Front-page news feature stories usually employ this format
- Tries to incorporate storytelling techniques in news writing
- Begins with a lead that focuses on a specific individual, situation or anecdote and uses that to illustrate a larger problem
- Four parts:
 - Lead - Describes a person, place, situation or event that may not be newsworthy by itself but exemplifies a larger problem that is newsworthy
 - Nut Graph - Central point of the story
 - Body - Develops the central point in detail
 - Kicker - Brings the story to conclusion
- The focus style has flexibility

The Narrative Style

- A narrative has two components:

- Story
- Storyteller
- Requires observation
- Allows reporters to be more creative
- Generally, such stories have a beginning, a middle and an end, each of relatively equal importance
- It is more difficult to cut the final paragraphs of narrative stories than of stories written in the inverted pyramid style
- Not appropriate for all stories

Using Transitions

- Transitions help stories move from one fact to the next in a smooth, logical order.
- Reporters introduce ideas by relating them to ideas reported earlier in a story
- Transitional words
 - Sometimes a single word can lead readers from one idea to the next
 - Many refer to time
- Transitional sentences
 - Link paragraphs that contain diverse ideas, but the sentences should do more than report that another idea was "introduced" or "discussed"
 - Should present some interesting details about the new topic so readers want to finish the story
- Questions as transitions
 - Transitional sentences occasionally take the form of questions
 - Questions should be short

Explain the Unfamiliar

- Reporters should avoid words that are not used in everyday conversation
- When an unfamiliar word is necessary, journalists must immediately define it
- Here are the three techniques journalists can use to define or explain unfamiliar terms:
 - Place a brief explanation in parentheses
 - Place the explanation immediately after the unfamiliar name or term, setting it off with a colon, comma or dash
 - Place the explanation in the next sentence
- Large numbers need explaining
- When a sentence must explain several items in a list, the explanation should precede the list, not follow it.

The Importance of Examples

- Examples make stories more interesting, personalize them and help audience members understand them more easily.
- Examples are especially important in stories about abstract issues.
- Reporters can clarify unfamiliar concepts by comparing them to things that are familiar

The Use of Description

- Descriptions make stories more interesting and help people visualize scenes
- Descriptions help the audience see the situation or person through the eyes of