

INRO TO JOURNALISM / WALL-SIMMONS

FEATURE STORY RUBRIC

Reporter _____

Topic _____

Objectives	Exemplary Performance 100-90 points	At or Above Average 89-80 points	At or Below Average 79-70 points	Low Performance 69 points or less	Points Earned
Effective and Appropriate Lead	Lead is exceptional and reflects a great deal of creative energy ; so powerful it captivates the reader's interest; grabs the reader by the lapels and hurls him into the story ; first sentence immediately commits the reader ; lead fits well with the rest of the story; developed with rich description of place and character and/or an engaging narrative and/or a powerful left hook contrast lead that effectively teases the reader until the point of the story is unveiled in a 'nut graf' that flows seamlessly into story; language is exceptional and alive and shows exceptional effort	Lead appropriate to story and effective at getting attention; shows originality; invites reader in (doesn't hurl); first sentence is good but not remarkable; lead has description or narration but it may be lacking in richness of detail or a contrast lead that could be stronger; lead is effective at teasing the reader but reader may find nut graf somewhat predictable; language is better than average and shows effort at word choice	Lead is adequate but not very catchy or original; reader could walk away; first sentence is average and doesn't pass the three second rule; lead lacks specific description/narration/ or contrast and doesn't tease the reader to any surprise in the nut graf; nut graf may come too abruptly or may not adequately explain the point of the story; some good word choices but most language in the lead is a bit passive, dry	Lead is neither original or catchy; boring, overused or trite, or is inappropriate to story; shows lack of creative effort; has many general statements as opposed to active narration or description; lacks details; first sentence is boring; word choice / language is below average and lacks any surprising wording.	
Quotes / Anecdotes Show Evidence of Good Interviewing, Careful Reporting	Interviews have surpassed minimum requirement ; distinct evidence of good research, interviewing ; and use of skillful follow-up questions ; interviewees have revealed captivating stories ; skillfully uses individuals, anecdotes to illustrate larger issues ; sources provide rich, relevant supporting information ; facts have been integrated in a professional and insightful way , using quotes from the interviews to support angle ; all sources are identified ; info is properly attributed ; there is human interest and an emotional impact that is profound	Interviews have met the minimum or surpassed requirement; most quotes show evidence of effective research / interviewing and good follow-up questions; interviewees have revealed stories that, for the most part, capture the reader's interest; facts have been integrated to illustrate the topic more clearly; all sources are clearly identified; most information attributed to sources; quotes are interesting and story-telling; may use some anecdotal info but not as much as necessary to breath life into piece; the human interest is evident and emotional impact is felt	Interviews have barely met minimum requirement – there should have been more people interviewed and/or those present are minimal in content or lack credibility; one or two of the quotes show evidence of good interviewing, but most do not help propel the story; facts have been included, but in a basic manner; some sources are improperly identified or some info or opinion is given without attribution; interviewees may not have revealed stories that capture the reader's interest or help make an impact on the story; the human interest is not completely clear, nor the emotional impact	Interviews and/or interviews are either too short, missing, or confusing; quotes are short, weak or ineffective; no evidence of follow-up questions being asked; or sources are improperly identified; or much info is given without attribution; or topic sentences are missing or confusing; the reader has not really learned or felt anything of significance from the feature	
Effective Body, Development, Organization and Flow (deals with structure)	Story is strongly organized with clear transitions and logical connections which create a sense of being tightly woven together ; gives reader dynamic impression and profound	Story is organized and most transitions and connections are clear, but either organization is somewhat lacking or the sense of flow seems somewhat abrupt; gives reader vivid impression	Story lacks strong organization; jumps around too much or lacks effective transitions or transitions are awkward; not in logical order; story is revealed (<i>minimum requirements met</i>), but it	Story is choppy or incohesive; organization is unclear; few effective transitions or transitions are confusing; or uses <i>sweeping generalizations</i> with <i>little</i> or <i>no</i> supporting examples, details, and	

	<p>understanding of the subject; feature <i>aptly</i> uses examples, details, quotes, statistics, and description to make reader feel something strongly; creative transitions have been used; similes and metaphors (or other descriptive techniques) may also have been used to enhance writing; story explores deep qualities of the issue/person and weaves essential facts and elements into the feature artfully; <i>excellent</i> use of reporting graf/quote graf formula; breaks the mold!</p>	<p>and deep understanding of the subject; feature <i>strongly</i> uses examples, details, and quotes to make reader feel something strongly; sophisticated transitions have been used; similes and metaphors (or other descriptive techniques) may also have been used to enhance writing; story explores the issue and weaves essential facts/elements in artfully; <i>good</i> use of reporting graf/quote graf formula</p>	<p>may be done in a predictable and/or awkward way with <i>little</i> or <i>no</i> examples, details, and quotes to make reader feel something strongly; <i>little</i> or <i>no</i> description may have been used to add life to the language; <i>inconsistent</i> use of reporting graf/quote graf formula or reporting grafs are insignificant; story may not be very compelling; outline could have been thought through more thoroughly</p>	<p>quotes to make reader feel something of any meaning; or <i>little</i> or <i>no</i> attempt to use descriptive language; or information is unfocused or confusing; or paragraphs are too long or too short; or no sense of reporting graf/quote graf formula; outline ignored or not used</p>	
<p>Clear Angle / Focus and Unity</p>	<p>Focus (angle) of story is clear and <i>sufficiently</i> narrowed; nothing detracts from primary focus; everything contributes to overall theme / angle</p>	<p>Angle is fairly clear but one or two things on the story detract from the primary focus; or angle could be a bit more narrowed/defined</p>	<p>Story lacks strong angle or sense of unity and focus; several things seem to detract from focus</p>	<p>No clear angle or focus; story is rambling and awkward</p>	
<p>Interesting and Effective Writing Style</p>	<p>Professional. Sophisticated; high level, active words are selected deliberately; piece is tightly written; no more than one mechanical error in the entire piece; sentence structure / length is varied; shows a <i>great deal</i> of effort and creativity; reads like a professional feature from the NY Times or Rolling Stone</p>	<p>Writing is good but not exceptionally compelling or original; most vocabulary is sophisticated and used properly; vocabulary is varied and correct; no more than 3 mechanical errors in the entire piece; piece is vivid – with some revisions it could be found in <i>Newsday</i> or <i>Daily News</i> or solid magazine</p>	<p>Language is rather basic – passable in some areas, weak in others; author may use simple words and take few risks; vocabulary is somewhat dull and/or repetitive and/or used incorrectly; story is legible but may contain multiple errors. Needs more life!</p>	<p>Writing lacks a clear voice and original style; misuses basic vocabulary; ignores basic rules of mechanics (capitalization, sentence structure, spelling, etc.); story reads at a low-level; difficult to read because of a number of distracting errors</p>	
<p>Effective and Appropriate Ending</p>	<p>Ending is exceptional and reflects a great deal of creative energy; so powerful the reader can't stop thinking about it; wind down is evident, flows seamlessly from story and ends in a final statement (shocking statement or killer quote) that leaves reader immobilized; ending strongly ties back to the beginning and fits well with the rest of the story; writer takes as long to get out as she did to get into story; developed in the same style as lead, rich description of place and character and/or an ending to narrative begun in lead; language is exceptional and alive and shows exceptional effort</p>	<p>Ending is good and reflects creative energy; wind down is present, flows from story and ends in a final statement (<i>shocking statement</i> or <i>killer quote</i>) that leaves reader thinking; ending ties back to the beginning and fits well with the rest of the story; writer takes as long to get out as she did to get into story; ending developed in the same style as lead, description of place and character and/or an <i>ending</i> to narrative begun in lead; language is good and shows effort</p>	<p>Ending is adequate but not very catchy or original; wind down may come too abruptly or writer may not take as long to exit the story as she did to enter it; final sentence is average but doesn't affect reader emotionally; ending lacks strong description/narration/ or contrast; some good word choices but most language in the ending is a bit passive, dry</p>	<p>Ending is neither original or catchy; boring, overused or trite, or is inappropriate to story; shows lack of creative effort; has many general statements as opposed to active narration or description; lacks details; ending may be non-existent or far too abrupt; final sentence is boring; word choice / language is below average and lacks any surprising wording.</p>	

Correct use of Journalism Style	NO errors in journalism style (quotes, dates, scores, numbers, money, percents, time, commas, etc.); 35-40 word paragraphs; quotes stand alone; attributions in subject-verb order; sources have ID in first reference	Has few (one or two in story) errors in journalism style; or may have non-journalistic paragraph structure; or sources may not be cited correctly	Has several errors in journalism style or non-journalistic paragraph structure	Has many errors in journalism style and/or non-journalistic paragraph structure	
Effort, Improvement, Presentation	Evidence of <u>substantial</u> time ; student is working at highest potential ; details are thorough and factual ; there are no errors in content ; student sought help in or out of class from teacher and students; student chose a challenging topic; revisions obvious	Evidence of extra time; student is working near highest potential; some improvement; student sought help in or out of class; revisions made	Some amount of time is evident though more attention should have been given; not working near potential	Time was not used productively; little or no time or care; no attention paid to basics; gross errors; sloppy; little or no revision evident; this piece is not up to par with high school writing	

FATAL FLAWS: (if any one of these flaws occurs the story will earn an automatic 50 points and no higher)

- _____ Writer writes one of the ‘cliché feature leads’ or uses a quote or question lead.
- _____ Writer has no distinct angle.
- _____ Writer has only one source.
- _____ Writer uses unattributed opinion, editorializes or tries to be omniscient.
- _____ Writer seems unaware of reporting graf/quite graf format or consistently writes weak reporting graf.

Comments:

Total