

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
<p>Effective and Appropriate Lead</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>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.</p>	
<p>Quotes / Anecdotes Show Evidence of Good Interviewing, Careful Reporting</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>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</p>	
<p>Effective Body, Development, Organization and Flow (deals with structure)</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>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>	

	<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