

writing a feature article

writing a feature article involves a unique blend of storytelling, research, and journalistic skill designed to engage readers deeply while providing informative content. Unlike standard news reports, feature articles emphasize narrative, character development, and vivid details, making them compelling reads. Crafting a successful feature article requires understanding the topic thoroughly, conducting interviews, and structuring the content in a way that captivates the audience from the headline to the final paragraph. This article explores the essential steps and best practices in writing a feature article, covering everything from topic selection and research to drafting and editing. Additionally, it highlights key elements such as crafting strong leads, maintaining reader interest, and adhering to journalistic ethics. Following this guide will help writers produce high-quality, SEO-optimized feature articles that resonate with readers and perform well in search engine rankings.

- Understanding Feature Articles
- Planning and Researching Your Feature
- Structuring the Feature Article
- Writing Techniques for Feature Articles
- Editing and Refining Your Article

Understanding Feature Articles

Feature articles are a specialized form of journalistic writing that goes beyond simply reporting facts. They provide in-depth coverage of a topic, person, or event, emphasizing narrative flow, human interest, and detailed descriptions. These articles often appear in magazines, newspapers, and online platforms, aiming to inform, entertain, or provoke thought. Understanding the characteristics of feature articles is foundational for effective writing.

Definition and Purpose

A feature article is a detailed and engaging piece that explores a subject from various angles, often incorporating storytelling elements. Its purpose is to offer readers a comprehensive understanding, emotional connection, or new perspective on the topic. Unlike breaking news, which prioritizes timeliness and brevity, feature articles focus on depth and richness.

Types of Feature Articles

There are several types of feature articles, each with a distinct style and objective:

- **Profile Features:** Focus on a particular individual's life and achievements.
- **Human-Interest Features:** Highlight personal stories that evoke emotion.
- **How-To Features:** Provide step-by-step guidance or advice.
- **Trend Features:** Explore current trends and their implications.
- **Investigative Features:** Delve into issues requiring detailed research and analysis.

Planning and Researching Your Feature

Effective planning and thorough research are critical steps in writing a feature article. They lay the groundwork for a credible, well-rounded story that engages readers.

Choosing a Compelling Topic

Selecting the right topic is essential to capture reader interest and ensure relevance. Consider subjects that are timely, unique, or have a strong human element. The topic should also align with the target audience's preferences and the publication's focus.

Conducting In-Depth Research

Comprehensive research involves gathering information from multiple sources to provide accuracy and depth. This includes:

1. Reviewing existing literature and previous articles.
2. Conducting interviews with experts, witnesses, or participants.
3. Collecting statistical data or factual evidence.
4. Observing events or environments firsthand, if possible.

Organizing Information

After collecting data, organizing the information logically is crucial. Use note-taking methods or digital tools to categorize facts, quotes, and observations. This practice

facilitates easier drafting and ensures all relevant points are covered.

Structuring the Feature Article

A well-structured feature article guides readers smoothly through the story, maintaining their interest and delivering the intended message effectively. The structure typically consists of a captivating introduction, a detailed body, and a conclusive ending.

Crafting a Strong Lead

The lead is the opening paragraph(s) that grabs the reader's attention immediately. It should be engaging, intriguing, and provide a hint of what the article will cover. Popular lead techniques include anecdotal leads, question leads, descriptive leads, or startling fact leads.

Building the Body

The body forms the core of the feature article, where the main content unfolds. Use subheadings to break down the text into manageable sections. Each section should focus on a specific aspect of the topic, supported by facts, quotes, and vivid descriptions. Maintaining flow and coherence between paragraphs is vital.

Concluding Effectively

The conclusion should provide closure without simply repeating earlier information. It may offer insights, reflections, or a call to action. A strong ending leaves a lasting impression and reinforces the article's significance.

Writing Techniques for Feature Articles

Employing the right writing techniques enhances readability and reader engagement. Feature articles benefit from a narrative style, clear language, and the strategic use of literary devices.

Using Narrative and Descriptive Language

Incorporating storytelling elements transforms factual content into an immersive experience. Use vivid descriptions, sensory details, and anecdotes to create imagery and emotional resonance. This approach helps readers connect with the subject on a personal level.

Maintaining Objectivity and Credibility

While feature articles allow for creativity, maintaining journalistic integrity is crucial. Present information accurately, attribute sources properly, and avoid bias. Balancing narrative flair with factual reliability builds trust with readers.

Optimizing for SEO

To improve search engine visibility, integrate the primary keyword "writing a feature article" naturally throughout the text. Use related terms such as "feature article structure," "feature writing tips," and "journalistic storytelling." Additionally, include relevant subheadings and maintain keyword density between 1% and 2% for optimal SEO performance.

Editing and Refining Your Article

Editing is a vital stage that ensures the feature article is polished, clear, and error-free. It enhances the overall quality and professionalism of the piece.

Revising for Clarity and Flow

Review the article to improve sentence structure, coherence, and logical progression. Remove redundant information and ensure transitions between paragraphs are smooth. Reading the article aloud can help identify awkward phrasing or pacing issues.

Proofreading for Grammar and Style

Check for spelling, grammar, punctuation, and stylistic consistency. Adhering to a specific style guide, such as AP or Chicago, may be necessary depending on the publication. Accurate proofreading prevents distractions and maintains credibility.

Fact-Checking and Source Verification

Verify all facts, figures, and quotations to avoid inaccuracies. Confirm sources' credibility and ensure permissions are obtained when required. Accurate fact-checking is fundamental in upholding journalistic standards.

Final Checklist for Feature Articles

- Is the lead engaging and informative?
- Does the article maintain reader interest throughout?

- Are all claims supported by credible evidence?
- Is the content free of grammatical and spelling errors?
- Has SEO optimization been applied appropriately?
- Is the tone professional and consistent?

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a feature article and how does it differ from a news article?

A feature article is a detailed and in-depth piece that explores a topic, person, or event with more context, background, and storytelling elements, whereas a news article focuses on reporting recent events or facts in a concise and straightforward manner.

What are the key elements to include when writing a feature article?

Key elements include a compelling headline, an engaging lead or introduction, detailed body content with quotes and facts, a clear structure with subheadings if needed, and a strong conclusion that leaves an impact.

How do you choose a topic for a feature article?

Choose a topic that is relevant, interesting, and has a human angle or unique perspective. Consider your audience's interests, current trends, and stories that can evoke emotion or provide valuable insights.

What techniques can make a feature article more engaging?

Use storytelling techniques such as vivid descriptions, anecdotes, direct quotes, and a narrative arc. Incorporate varied sentence structure, active voice, and maintain a conversational tone to keep readers interested.

How important is research when writing a feature article?

Research is crucial for accuracy, depth, and credibility. It helps provide context, support claims with facts, and enrich the article with relevant data, expert opinions, and real-life examples.

What role does the lead play in a feature article?

The lead serves as the hook to grab the reader's attention and set the tone for the article. A strong lead can be a surprising fact, an anecdote, a question, or a vivid description that draws readers in and encourages them to continue reading.

Additional Resources

1. *Writing Feature Articles: How to Research and Write Newspaper and Magazine Articles That Inform, Entertain, and Persuade*

This book offers a comprehensive guide to crafting compelling feature articles. It covers the essentials of researching, interviewing, and structuring stories that engage readers. With practical tips and real-world examples, it helps writers develop a strong narrative voice and sharpen their journalistic skills.

2. *Feature Writing for Newspapers and Magazines*

Designed for both beginners and experienced journalists, this book provides step-by-step instructions on writing feature pieces that capture attention. It delves into finding story ideas, creating captivating leads, and maintaining reader interest throughout. The book also emphasizes ethical considerations and accuracy in feature writing.

3. *The Art of Feature Writing: From Headlines to Leads to Liftoff*

Focusing on the craft of storytelling, this book explores how to transform ordinary events into compelling narratives. It discusses techniques for writing vivid descriptions, developing characters, and building suspense. Readers will learn how to create memorable features that resonate with audiences.

4. *Feature Writing: The Pursuit of Excellence*

This text explores the principles and practices that define outstanding feature writing. It includes lessons on style, tone, and voice, helping writers refine their individual approach. Additionally, it provides exercises and assignments to hone skills in research, organization, and editing.

5. *Writing to Publish: How to Write Articles That Get Published in Newspapers, Magazines, and Online*

A practical guide for writers looking to get their feature articles published, this book covers pitching ideas, understanding editorial expectations, and tailoring content for different outlets. It also offers advice on marketing oneself as a freelance writer and building a professional portfolio.

6. *The Feature Story in Journalism*

This book examines the structure and elements that make a feature story compelling and readable. It discusses narrative techniques, the importance of human interest, and ways to incorporate background information without overwhelming the reader. The author includes examples from renowned feature articles to illustrate key points.

7. *Magazine Feature Writing: How to Write Articles That Capture the Reader's Attention*

Specially geared towards magazine writers, this book outlines how to develop ideas suited for magazine audiences. It covers research methods, interview techniques, and crafting stylistic prose. The book also highlights trends in magazine publishing and how to adapt

writing to different genres.

8. *Writing Feature Articles: A Guide for Students and Journalists*

This educational resource offers clear guidance for students and aspiring journalists on writing feature articles. It breaks down the writing process into manageable steps, from idea generation to final edits. The book includes sample articles and exercises to practice key skills.

9. *The New Journalism: How to Write Feature Articles and Reports*

Exploring the evolution of feature writing, this book discusses innovative techniques used by modern journalists to tell stories in engaging ways. It emphasizes immersive reporting, narrative depth, and the use of literary devices. Readers will gain insight into creating feature articles that stand out in today's media landscape.

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