



Maamwi Submission Guidelines

Maamwi Naadamadaa News Mission

Our mission is to be the leading provider of information, services and tools to inspire and support First Nations organizations and individuals on Mnídoo Mnising.

Maamwi News is published quarterly by The United Chiefs and Councils of Mnídoo Mnising through Kenjgewin Educational Institute's (KTEI) Graphics Department.

The Tools

Writing news stories takes practice and not everyone will be an expert, but if you follow some guidelines, you should be able to create effective news items without too much stress.

The Five "W"s and the "H"

This is the crux of all news - you need to know five things:

Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?

Any good news story provides answers to each of these questions. With practice, they become second nature.

For example, if you wish to cover a story about a local sports team entering a competition you will need to answer these questions:

- **Who** is the team? Who is the coach? Who are the prominent players? Who are the supporters?
- **What** sport do they play? What is the competition?
- **Where** is the competition? Where is the team normally based?
- **When** is the competition? How long have they been preparing? Are there any other important time factors?
- **Why** are they entering this particular competition? If it's relevant, why does the team exist at all?
- **How** are they going to enter the competition? Do they need to fundraise? How much training and preparation is required? What will they need to do to win?

The Inverted Pyramid

This refers to the style of journalism that places the most important facts at the beginning and works "down" from there. Ideally, the first paragraph should contain enough information to give the reader a good overview of the entire story. The rest of the article explains and expands on the beginning.

A good approach is to assume that the story might be cut off at any point due to space limitations. Does the story work if the editor only decides to include the first two paragraphs? If not, re-arrange it so that it does.

The same principle can apply to any type of medium.

More Tips

1. It's About People

News stories are all about how people are affected. In your sports story, you might spend some time focusing on one or more individuals, or on how the team morale is doing, or how the supporters are feeling.

2. Have an Angle

Most stories can be presented using a particular angle or "slant". This is a standard technique and isn't necessarily bad - it can help make the purpose of the story clear and give it focus. Examples of angles you could use for your sports story:

- a. "Team Tackles National Competition"
- b. "Big Ask for First-Year Coach"
- c. "Local Team in Need of Funds"

3. Keep it Objective

You are completely impartial. If there is more than one side to the story, cover them all. Don't use "I" and "me" unless you are quoting someone. Speaking of quoting...

4. Quote People

For example: "We're really excited about this competition," says coach Bob Dobalina, "It's the highest target we've ever set ourselves".

5. Don't Get Flowery

Keep your sentences and paragraphs short. Don't use lots of heavily descriptive language. When you've finished, go through the entire story and try to remove any words which aren't completely necessary.

Give Your Story a Headline

Your headline is the first, and perhaps only, impression you make on a prospective reader. Without a compelling promise that turns a browser into a reader, the rest of your words may as well not even exist. So, from a copywriting and content marketing standpoint, writing great headlines is a critical skill.

On average, 8 out of 10 people will read headline copy, but only 2 out of 10 will read the rest. This is the secret to the power of your title, and why it so highly determines the effectiveness of the entire piece.

What is a headline?

- A headline is an abstract sentence
- Usually it is only five to ten words
- It is a complete thought
- It has a subject and a verb, and often an object

The goal is to grab the reader

- Ask yourself this question as you compose a headline:
 - *If people see my five to ten words, will they know what the article is about?*

Tips

- Use punctuation sparingly
- Don't eat up space with the conjunction *and*. Instead, use a comma.
- *Principal and parents meet on school rules for next year*
Principal, parents agree on new school rules
- Don't use the articles *a*, *an* and *the*. They waste space unnecessarily.
- *A new fire engine helps make the houses safer*
New fire engine helps make houses safer

Submitting Photos

Send high quality .jpgs of around 2mb at 300dpi. Don't send more than 2-3 images in 1 e-mail attachment. (Ideally - include keywords etc. in the file info) In the body of the e-mail put a very brief description of what the photos are of (see captions – next category). Be very judgmental of your own work and only send the best images with different views. i.e. scene setting shot, close up, human interaction.

Photo Captions & Cutlines

A picture is worth a thousand words (but only if it's got a really good cutline, too!)

Photo captions and cutlines are the most read body type in a publication. Of all the news content, only the titles of stories or headlines have higher readership than captions. It follows that standards of accuracy, clarity, completeness and good writing are as high for captions and cutlines than for other type. As with headlines, captions and cutlines must be crisp. As with stories, they must be readable and informative.

Note: Captions and cutlines are terms that are often used interchangeably, particularly at magazines. For our purposes, we will make the following distinctions.

- **Captions:** Captions are the little “headlines” over the “cutlines” (the words describing the photograph). See example.
- **Cutlines:** Cutlines (at newspapers and some magazines) are the words (under the caption, if there is one) describing the photograph or illustration. See example.

Example: Obama vs. Palin - **Caption**

President Obama and former Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin have agreed to disagree over the rules of a “death match” scheduled between the two in the Capitol Rotunda. Betting odds in Las Vegas give the nod to Palin, who has been known to shoot a moose, after the two met on Thursday. - **Cutline**

Required information

The specific information required can vary from one photo to the next. But for most pictures a reader wants to know such information as:

- Who is that? (And, in most cases, identify people from left to right unless the action in the photograph demands otherwise.)
- Why is this picture in the paper?
- What's going on?
- When and where was this?
- Why does he/she/it/they look that way?
- How did this occur?

What Makes a Story Newsworthy?

News can be defined as "Newsworthy information about recent events or happenings, especially as reported by news media". But what makes news newsworthy?

There is a list of five factors, detailed below, which are considered when deciding if a story is newsworthy. When an editor needs to decide whether to run with a particular story, s/he will ask how well the story meets each of these criteria. Normally, a story should perform well in at least two areas.

Naturally, competition plays a part. If there are a lot of newsworthy stories on a particular day then some stories will be dropped. Although some stories can be delayed until a new slot becomes available, time-sensitive news will often be dropped permanently.

1. Timing

The word news means exactly that - things which are new. Topics that are current are

good news. Consumers are used to receiving the latest updates, and there is so much news about that old news is quickly discarded.

A story with only average interest needs to be told quickly if it is to be told at all. If it happened today, it's news. If the same thing happened last week, it's no longer interesting.

2. Significance

The number of people affected by the story is important. A plane crash in which hundreds of people died is more significant than a crash killing a dozen.

3. Proximity

Stories that happen near to us have more significance. The closer the story to home, the more newsworthy it is. For someone living in France, a major plane crash in the USA has a similar news value to a small plane crash near Paris.

Note that proximity doesn't have to mean geographical distance. Stories from countries with which we have a particular bond or similarity have the same effect. For example, Australians would be expected to relate more to a story from a distant Western nation than a story from a much closer Asian country.

4. Prominence

Famous people get more coverage just because they are famous. If you break your arm it won't make the news, but if the Queen of England breaks her arm it's big news.

5. Human Interest

Human interest stories are a bit of a special case. They often disregard the main rules of newsworthiness; for example, they don't date as quickly, they need not affect a large number of people, and it may not matter where in the world the story takes place.

Human interest stories appeal to emotion. They aim to evoke responses such as amusement or sadness. Television news programs often place a humorous or quirky story at the end of the show to finish on a feel-good note. Newspapers often have a dedicated area for offbeat or interesting items.

Copyright in a Nutshell

This is a short, simple guide to copyright issues.

Original work is automatically copyright

If you create something original, you don't need to do anything in order to claim copyright. You don't need to include the © symbol, you don't need to post a copy to yourself or deposit a copy in a library. The only requirement is that the work is entirely original.

Of course it pays to have some good evidence that you produced the work, in case you enter into a dispute later on. Having your work published is obviously a good option if possible, but even posting on a blog is better than nothing.

Modifying someone else's work

You can't modify someone else's work and call it your own. This becomes a gray area when a work is used as research material, in fact a common quote says: "Copying from one source is plagiarism, copying from multiple sources is research". This isn't true of course; copying is copyright infringement no matter how many sources you rip off. However it is possible to use multiple sources, with attribution, in legally acceptable ways (see how I do it).

Fair Use

The term "fair use" applies only in the United States. It means that copyright work may be used in certain circumstances such as parody. This definition does not hold any legal weight outside the US, although other countries do have provisions for using small portions of copyright material for criticism and education. This is widely known as "fair

dealing".

Fair use and fair dealing are quite specific, and you must make sure you meet the requirements. If you think you can grab parts of your favorite film or music to mashup into a YouTube video and call it fair use, you're probably wrong.

Public Domain

Public domain material is actually relatively rare. A work will only be public domain if one of the two following conditions are met:

- The copyright has expired (typically 70 years after the author's death, although this varies), or
- The work has been explicitly released into the public domain by the author.

Do not assume a work is public domain just because it's publicly available.

Being on the Internet does not make a work public domain, in fact most material on the Internet is copyright.

Giving credit

Giving credit (attribution) does not mean it's okay to copy. Although attribution is desirable, it does not affect the copyright status and does not get you off the hook.

Copying for non-profit

It's a myth that it's okay to ignore copyright if you're not making any money from it. That's like saying it's okay to steal a car as long as you're not going to use it as a taxi.

Creative Commons

Many works have a creative commons license, which means you may use the work according to the specific conditions of the license (these vary). It is still copyright.

Permission

In many instances you can obtain permission to use copyright material. Be sure to understand and adhere to the conditions of that permission.

Be aware that some large companies (e.g. Google, radio stations) have wide-reaching agreements that allow them to reproduce copyright work. This does not mean that you have the same permission. In other words, just because you see a public search engine display pages from a book, this does not mean you have the right to use that material.

Justifications for copyright infringement

People often justify copyright infringements with arguments such as:

- It won't hurt the author or cost them money, so there's no problem.
- I'm doing the author a favour by promoting their work.
- It's in the public interest that I use some particular work.
- The author is so wealthy it doesn't matter if I use their work in my little blog.
- Lots of other people are doing it so it must be okay.
- These are all psychological justifications that simply aren't valid.

Options

If you need to use some material and you're having trouble finding a legal source, your two best options are:

1. Contact the copyright holder and ask for permission.
2. Find other sources, such as stock libraries or Wikimedia Commons. These sources do have conditions but as long as you read and obey the rules, you can find lots of usable material.