

Story Structure

First Paragraph

- Start your story with the most interesting thing you learned researching your story. Set the stage for your reader.
- Use details to describe what's going on, where the story is taking place, what the person is doing, looks like, is saying.

Second and Third Paragraphs

- Your second paragraph is one of two things: a nut graph or a quote. A quote usually works best. The quote should build on the information in the first paragraph. The third paragraph will be a nut graph. (Some journalists call it a billboard.) This paragraph tells why this story is important to the reader. It should include the where and when.

Here's an example. (The nut graph is underlined)

Jane Student, 11, was recently accepted by Scholastic News to be part of the 2006-2007 Scholastic Kids Press Corps.

"I nearly flipped when I got the acceptance letter," Jane said. "I have always been interested in politics."

Jane is one of 15 students chosen by Scholastic to cover news stories over the next year. Scholastic Student Reporters have covered presidential campaigns, sports events, and breaking news stories. Reporters are chosen by Scholastic magazine editors based on the quality of their applications.

The Rest of the Story

- The next three to four paragraphs, which will complete your story, provide other information.
- These graphs should include at least one more quote, which usually goes at the end. The end quote should sum up the point of the story. In the above example, a quote from one of the editors would be a good follow-up to the nut graph.

"Jane's application stood out because of the quality of her writing and her enthusiasm for the project," said John D. Editor.

- The rest of the story would be about Jane's qualifications, her background, and why she was chosen.

The Kicker

- The kicker is the last paragraph of the story. It usually sums up the point of the story. It should also refer back to the first paragraph, which ties everything up nicely for the reader.
- In the above example, the story ended with a quote from Jane's editor. You could also end it with information about Jane's upcoming assignments.