
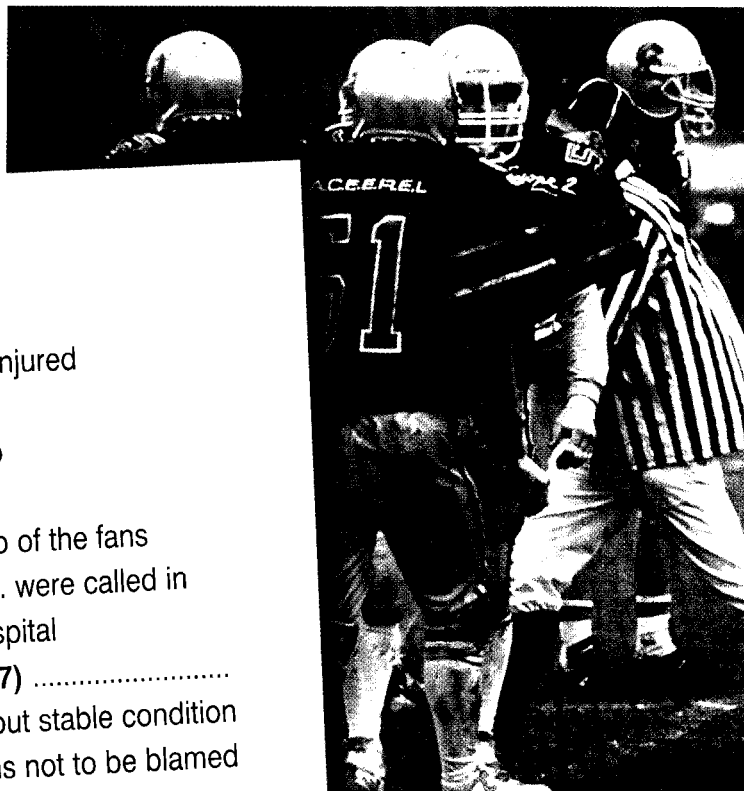


b. News Reports

- 1  You will hear part of a TV news broadcast. Read the following table, then listen to the cassette and fill in the missing information. Listen again, then using your notes, describe the event in your own words.

Incident:	gate 1)
Place:	Wellgood Stadium in Barton
Time:	early 2)
People involved:	one person dead, twenty others injured
Reason:	fault in 3)
Events:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4) queuing up • heard grinding noise • gate 5) on top of the fans • emergency 6) were called in • injured taken to St Luke's Hospital • Larry Martin was found to be 7) • others in 8) but stable condition
Comments:	terrible 9) - fans not to be blamed
Action taken:	stadium closed until a thorough structural 10) has been carried out



A news report is a brief piece of writing for publication in a newspaper, giving factual information concerning an important current event. It is formal and impersonal in style, presenting facts objectively and unemotionally.

A successful report should consist of:

- a **headline** which is short and eye-catching, giving the reader an idea of the subject of the report;
- an **introductory paragraph** which summarises the event, including information about the people involved, the place, the time, etc.;
- a **main body** in which the relevant information is developed in detail, including an explanation of the cause(s) and/or result(s) of the event; and
- a **conclusion** which mentions the significance of the event, future action to be taken, reactions/comments of a witness/spokesperson, etc.

Points to Consider

- Comments made by witnesses, victims, the police, etc may be given in direct or reported speech:
"We won't give in," commented a workers' spokesman.
The two boys later admitted that what they had done was wrong.
- Passive voice and appropriate reporting verbs (e.g. *confessed, protested, etc*) are widely used in news reports, together with a range of linking words and time expressions.

Headline

Introduction

Paragraph 1

summary of event —
what/who/where/when/
how/why

Main Body

Paragraphs 2-3-4

description/details of
event
cause(s) and/or result(s)

Conclusion

Final Paragraph

reference to future devel-
opments/comments/reac-
tions

- 2** Read the news reports below, and identify the topic of each paragraph. Then, underline all examples of passive voice, and say which tenses have been used in each report. Finally, choose the best headline for each report from those given on the right.

A A bomb exploded yesterday afternoon in the check-in hall of Hillsfield International Airport. Five people were killed and dozens more seriously injured in the blast.

The bomb went off without warning at 3 pm as hundreds of holidaymakers were preparing to board flights bound for Spain and Italy.

The explosion was caused by a substantial amount of plastic explosive connected to a timing device. The bomb was placed in a suitcase and left in the central check-in area, which was crowded with people at the time.

The emergency services arrived at the airport within minutes to deal with the widespread panic and devastation. Their first priority was to transfer the injured to hospital and put out the fires. Doctors were also called to the airport to treat the people who were in a state of shock.

The airport will remain closed until further notice. No one has yet claimed responsibility for the incident and police are appealing to the public for any information they might have.



BOMB LEFT IN SUITCASE

MASTERPIECE FOUND IN ATTIC

POLICE APPEAL TO PUBLIC

UNTITLED WORK SURVIVES

EXPLOSION ROCKS AIRPORT

1950 FIRE DESTROYS COLLECTION

B A painting by Pablo Picasso, which was thought to have been destroyed over forty years ago, was found by building workers in the attic of an old house in the village of Silverdale last Monday.

The builders were making alterations to the house when they made the discovery. The painting was wrapped in cloth and leaning against a wall in the attic, which was being cleared in preparation for restoration work.

The painting was believed to have been destroyed in a fire in 1950, along with several other well-known works of art belonging to collector Miles Duval. It is not clear how this particular work survived the blaze and came to be in the attic of the house.

The title of the painting has not yet been revealed to the public, but experts have verified that it is genuine and worth a great deal of money. The owner of the house, Mrs Brenda Freeman, said, "I had no idea it was there, so it's a wonderful surprise."

News reports and **narratives** differ in a number of ways with relation to style and content.

A **news report** is written in a formal style and deals only with facts. The writer's feelings are not mentioned. A news report starts with a summary of the event (who, when, what, where) which is then developed in detail. To end a news report, you can mention people's comments or make reference to future developments.

A **narrative** is written in an informal style and includes elaborate descriptions as well as the writer's feelings and emotions. You can begin or end a narrative by:

- describing the weather, place, people, etc using the senses
- using direct speech
- asking a rhetorical question
- creating mystery or suspense
- referring to feelings or moods

3 Match the beginnings with the endings, then decide which belong to news reports and which to narratives, justifying your answers.

BEGINNINGS...

- A major snowstorm hit the east coast of the United States yesterday, causing road accidents, power cuts and flight cancellations in New York, Boston and Hartford.
- "Who is it?" the voice said from behind the door. I stood on the porch, my heart pounding, my whole body cold and numb. I knew it was going to be hard to answer all of their questions after so many years of absence and hatred.
- Two builders were seriously injured yesterday morning when the scaffolding on the building site they were working on collapsed.

...ENDINGS

- As I glanced at the house in the distance, tears welled up in my eyes. How could I ever have known that my wish to be reunited with my parents would be met with such grief and hostility?
- "This was the worst natural disaster in the last thirty years," said Robert Albert, meteorologist for Channel 5 News. Schools and businesses are expected to remain closed until Thursday.
- A spokesman for the construction company stated that the two injured builders would receive the best medical attention at the company's expense. "We will take strict safety measures to ensure unfortunate incidents like this will not occur again in the future."

4 Replace each of the underlined words/phrases in the sentences below with synonymous ones from the list.

led to a public outcry, far-reaching repercussions, widespread fear, make a bid, fruitless, gave his seal of approval, wary, put paid to

- The Education Minister agreed to the new government proposals to reduce subsidies to universities.
- A Royal Air Force officer is planning to try to break the world land-speed record.
- A fire at Weston nuclear power station has caused a lot of worry among local residents.
- Attempts to promote non-biodegradable detergents have made a lot of people very angry due to the threat such products pose to the environment.
- Residents were advised to be cautious of anyone acting suspiciously.
- Accusations of embezzlement ruined the senator's hopes of running for president next year.
- The Prime Minister's decision to raise taxes will have a serious effect on the lives of many Britons.
- The police have appealed to the government following their unsuccessful attempts to stamp out crime among street gangs.



- 5** Read the following models and; a) say which is a news report and which is a narrative; b) give the paragraph plan for each model; c) say which requires a headline; and d) decide which model: i) is formal in style; ii) mentions the writer's feelings and reactions; iii) contains passive forms and direct speech; iv) includes rhetorical questions; and v) contains short forms.

A A huge explosion shook the centre of Chunswick yesterday afternoon. The event occurred shortly before five o'clock when a petrol tanker caught fire in Breakerton Road. Several people were killed in the explosion, which also caused extensive damage to nearby buildings.

Seven people, including three young children, died instantly in the explosion and fifteen others were later taken to hospital suffering from serious burns. The blast also destroyed the fronts of three buildings as well as a number of vehicles parked near the stationary tanker. Fortunately, the flames did not reach the underground storage tanks at the nearby service station.

Fire experts report that the explosion occurred after a burning cigarette was dropped into a puddle of petrol which had leaked from a pipe feeding petrol from the tanker into one of the service station's storage tanks. This verdict has been confirmed by several eyewitnesses, who claim to have been alarmed at the sight of the tanker's driver smoking a cigarette next to his vehicle while the filling process was in progress.

A spokesman for BALCO, the petrol company involved, has expressed deep regret at the incident. He added that all of the explosion's victims would receive compensation for their physical and emotional suffering.

B It was pleasantly sunny when I set off on my shopping trip. I thought I would escape the constant hassle and commotion of the city centre by taking a detour along Breakerton Road. How was I supposed to know this was a bad decision?

Breakerton Road had really changed a lot since the last time I was there. It seemed to have become one big car park with all kinds of vehicles cluttering up the pavements. The air was thick with the stench of exhaust fumes.

Was it stupidity or plain misfortune that made me choose that café on Breakerton Road for a cup of coffee? Once inside, I couldn't relax, because of the noisy traffic outside and the powerful smell of petrol from the service station next door. As I was sipping my coffee, I could see a tanker parked outside. I was alarmed to notice petrol seeping from a loose pipe onto the pavement. I felt a chill run down my spine and signalled to the waiter to bring me the bill.

As I was leaving the café, a couple of men were pointing agitatedly at the ground and then up to the tanker. The tanker driver seemed to take no notice of them as he stood at the back of the tanker smoking a cigarette. The next moment the ground was ablaze. Huge flames leapt up into the air. Thick black clouds blurred my vision. The noise was unimaginably loud, the impact immediate and ferocious. I remember the sudden flash of light. An instant later I was unconscious.

I don't know how I feel about it now. It was several days before I regained consciousness and learned that I was one of the lucky few who survived. I don't know if I should think of it as a terrible accident or search for someone to blame as so many others are doing. But I do know that things will never be the same.



- 6** Read the following notes from a reporter's notebook, and the brief news report which was written using these notes. Underline and number the notes in the order they appear in the news report, then say why the writer has not included the other information. Finally, give a suitable headline for the news report.

Millionaire missing – kidnapped??

- **Raymond Bradley (53) 15, Victoria St, Keswick**

Police:

- abducted 17.45, Friday 17th Sept
- possible involvement of organised crime syndicate – Bradley contributed to anti-drug fund
- suspect car found abandoned on shore of Lake Windermere
- investigations continuing

Wife (Candice, 48):

- offering reward of £50,000 for info
- "I never believed it could happen. It's like a nightmare."
- "The criminals are trying to get back the money they lost on drug sales."

Daughter (Wendy, 15):

- "He is the kindest man in the world. He was only trying to do some good, and now this happens."

Jeremy Walsh (witness, 38):

- "I saw him being pushed into a dark red Vauxhall Cavalier by a tall, dark-haired man in a black suit."

There is increasing concern for the safety of millionaire Raymond Bradley, who is believed to have been abducted from outside his home in Keswick on Friday afternoon.

He was last seen being pushed into a dark red Vauxhall Cavalier by a tall, dark-haired man in a black suit at about 5.45 pm on Friday. The vehicle was later found abandoned on the shore of Lake Windermere.

The police suspect that an organised crime syndicate may be responsible for Mr Bradley's abduction, since he had recently helped to fund a scheme aimed at ridding the area of illegal drugs. His wife, Candice, fears that local dealers might now be seeking 'compensation' for their losses.

Mrs Bradley is offering a reward of £50,000 for any information leading to the safe return of her husband. Meanwhile, the police are continuing their investigations.

- 7** Now read the notes below concerning a different event, decide which information you will include, and write a news report of about 150 words, with a suitable headline.

- Trevor Johnston (22)
12, Chatham Way, Sturminster
- won gold medal for 100m in National Championships yesterday
- University student
- broke previous record by 0.13 sec.
- only athlete from Sturminster ever to win a medal
- engaged to be married next summer
- celebration organised by Mayor for next Sunday



Trevor:

"I am proud to have brought such honour to my town. I couldn't have done it without my trainer. Next stop, the Olympics!"

Bruce Anderson (Trainer):

"He deserved to win. He is a dedicated athlete, and the best runner I've ever trained."

Mother (Martha Johnston):

"Ever since he was a little boy he loved to run. He always said that one day he'd get a medal. I'm so proud of him."

8 Read the following opening paragraphs from news reports, and rewrite them by putting the verbs into the passive.

- 1 Children discovered a suspicious-looking package in a city-centre shop yesterday. The shop owner called the police, who sent a bomb-disposal team which successfully defused the package.
- 2 The council closed down a well-known restaurant in Laycock last week after they found a mouse in the kitchen. Health officials warned the owner that he could not reopen the restaurant until it met the required standards of cleanliness.
- 3 A man held passengers on a Manchester bus captive for an hour on Monday afternoon. Police later removed the kidnapper, who was unarmed. They believe the man was making a protest about public transport services in the area.
- 4 An amateur has broken the world record for windsurfing across the Channel. The mayor of Longbridge congratulated 25-year-old Dean Travers upon his return home on Thursday. Dean had completed his record-breaking trip in near-perfect conditions two days previously.

9 Rewrite the following sentences in reported speech, using the reporting verbs from the list below. Each verb should only be used once.

announced, commented, denied, objected, refused

- 1 The Prime Minister said yesterday, "A new tax will be introduced from 1st January."

The Prime Minister announced yesterday that a new tax would be introduced from 1st January.

- 2 "That is not a matter I am prepared to discuss," the witness said to reporters.

- 3 "I don't like the fact that known criminals are released on bail while awaiting trial," said the judge.

- 4 Mr Bingley said, "I have never seen this woman before in my life, let alone tried to assault her."

- 5 The spokesman said, "It's worth noting that this is the largest crowd ever to have attended a Cup Final."

DISCUSS & WRITE

10 Look at the following writing task instructions, then answer the questions below.

a) *The newspaper you work for has asked you to write a news report covering a recent tragedy when an aeroplane crash-landed in the desert. Write the news report.*

b) *As a reporter you have been sent to interview twin brothers who were separated at birth and reunited thirty years later. Write a news report in about 150 words for the newspaper.*

c) *Choose two of the headlines below, and write two news reports of about 150 words each:*

48 VEHICLE PILE-UP ON M25

BOMB SCARE FALSE ALARM

ROYAL VISIT TO ORPHANAGE

MOUNTAIN CLIMBERS STILL MISSING

- What headlines could you use for the first two news reports?
- Which of the following information would you include in the introduction of each news report: what/where/when/who/why?
- Which details would you include in the main body of each news report, and in what order?
- How would you end each news report?

11 Now choose tasks a) and b) or, task c), and write a complete paragraph plan with notes. Then write the news reports in about 150 words each.