

Feature Writing
MIPA Fall Conference 2010
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Let's face it: the story you worked on yesterday probably won't be published for another week—or another month. Our publications usually come out once a month for newspapers and once a year for yearbooks.

We have two challenges then:

1. write a story that is timeless
2. write a story that attracts the reader (and doesn't get you suspended or the newspaper adviser fired)

Strategy #1: Introductions for feature stories should paint a picture with words. Don't begin with a question. Write numerous paragraphs that you use to "introduce" your subject.

Strategy #2: Focus on the emotions. Tug at someone's heartstrings. Tell the story so the reader feels sadness, empathy, joy, pride, or whatever emotion you showcase in your story.

Strategy #3: Use a nutgraf. The nutgraf is the place in a feature story that tells what the story is all about. It usually comes after three or more paragraphs of description "painted" by the writer. It is usually a single paragraph.

Strategy #4: Gather so much information you think you'll write a book. (And you might even have fun.)

Types of feature stories:

1. Personality —about an individual
2. News feature—focuses on a topic in the news, but in greater depth.
3. Spot feature—usually sidebars to the main story written on deadline
4. Trend story—stories about tech gadgets, bands, TV shows, fashion
5. The Live-in—paints a picture a particular place where people live or work—give readers look at place they usually don't go to

Feature story ideas I got from this session:

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