



Source: British Council [2012]. Writing skills practice: A magazine article—exercises. www.britishcouncil.org/learnenglish/teens

A feature article is a creative article that deals with real events, issues and trends. However, unlike hard news articles, it places emphasis on the people involved rather than on the facts of the news.

Structure of a magazine article

Headline (heading) or title of the article

The headline does **not necessarily** get **written first**. A suitable title or headline may not become evident until most of the content of the article has been written.

The headline, which is not normally a complete sentence, should:

- be **short**,
- not include a lot of detail
- **summarise the main idea** or subject of the article.

Short **catchy**
title

It should also:

- **catch readers' attention**. If it looks uninteresting, why would anyone read the article? There are various ways to achieve this. For example, if the task involves proposing a solution to a problem or your opinion, you can address your audience directly (e.g., 'Is jogging bad for our health?'; 'To flirt or not to flirt?').
- **mirror the style of the article**—formal or informal, for example.
- be shown in **larger letters** than the rest of the article.

Lead paragraph or introduction

The lead paragraph is found at the beginning of the article. It briefly answers the questions 'Who?', 'What?', 'When?', 'Why?', 'Where?' and 'How?'. The skeleton or outline of the story can be found in these answers. It should:

- **match the tone** of your title.
- **attract** and hold readers' **attention**.

Attract and
hold reader's
attention.

Supporting paragraph(s)

These develop the ideas introduced by the lead paragraph and give more information in the form of explanations, details or quotes.

Each paragraph should revolve around a main idea.

When planning your article:

- identify the main idea for each paragraph
- make sure that each sentence in the paragraph relates only to the main idea for that paragraph.
- begin each paragraph with a topic sentence that sums up the main idea of the whole paragraph. This will help the reader to quickly understand the topic of the paragraph, for example:
 - 'Australian teens are rejecting tanning.'
 - 'If you think that tanned skin will always be beautiful, think again.'
 - 'How many people suffer unnecessarily from ... ?'

Conclusion

The conclusion summarises the topic or provides a final opinion, recommendation or comment.

Layout and style

Magazine articles are often relaxed in their layout and style. They are more likely than more formal publications to use:

- bullet points
- anecdotes
- personal opinions
- humour.

**Above all,
the article should be
interesting
and
lively.**

Top tips for writing

1. Use a catchy title to get readers interested.
2. Ask direct questions in the article to get readers' attention, for example:
 - 'What is the impact of ... ?'
 - 'How can this problem be ... ?'
3. Use opinion adverbs to introduce your points (e.g., hopefully, basically, obviously, unfortunately, surprisingly).
4. Give a real-life example.
5. Choose a neutral or informal style depending on your audience.
6. Divide your ideas into clear paragraphs.