

# MEDIA LITERACY WEEK

## Finding and writing the story

**Research** is about finding the facts, people and pictures to tell a news story. When reporters do their research, they ask questions and find answers that they use to tell the news story. Research is also important for checking facts.

**A pitch** is a simple outline of a news story—usually to a news editor or executive producer. If your pitch is convincing, your news story will get the green light.

**A news story script** includes a description of all the words and pictures that will be used in a video. It is like a master plan for the story.



[Watch the video: Finding the story](#)

### 1. Research the story

**Here are some ideas to help you along the way:**

- Write down the facts you know about your story.
- List what you need to find out. Use the 5W questions to help
  - » WHAT is the story about?
  - » WHO was involved?
  - » WHERE did it take place?
  - » WHEN did it happen?
  - » WHY did it happen?
  - » and HOW did it happen?
- Find all the background information you can about your story. Do an internet search, listen to the radio, read newspapers and watch television programs to see what other news reports are saying about the issue.

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- Talk to some experts on the issue to find out the facts. Talk to more than one expert to make sure the information you find is correct.
  - Find different opinions for your story. Talk to the people in the community who are affected by the issue. Find out how they think it will affect them. Talk to community leaders, councillors, politicians and business people.
  - Keep track of the information you find by writing it down or using a voice recorder.

## 2. Preparing the pitch

1. Write one sentence to describe what your story is about.

Make sure you have all the information gathered during your research to help create your story pitch. Decide what needs to be included to tell the story.

2. Check you have answered the 5W questions: What, Who, Where, When, Why (and How).
3. Organise your information: set the scene, explore the issues, resolve the issue. Put the most important information first and less important information last.
4. Think about your story's 'news hook'. This is the angle that will capture your audience's interest and make the purpose of your story clear.
5. Look at your research and decide who you will interview for your story. Think about how they will help you tell your story. For example, how will the interviewee show how the issue affects people? Remember to interview people with different opinions and viewpoints for a balanced story.
6. Choose the pictures that will illustrate the story. The pictures you choose should connect with the words.
7. Work out how you are going to end your story.

## 3. Presenting the pitch

1. Work out who will present the pitch – one person or all the team members?
2. Practise your presentation.
3. Be prepared to receive feedback and answer questions at the end of your pitch. Use this feedback to help improve your news story.



### 3. Writing the news story

The structure of a news story is similar to a narrative or story. It starts by setting the scene (orientation), then it identifies the issue (complication) and ends by addressing the issue (resolution).

#### Use a combination of the following elements to tell your story.

##### **Pictures**

The pictures in your news story help to explain your main points. You can use video and still images. Graphics (including animation) and/or role plays can be useful to explain an idea.

##### **Interviews**

A news story usually includes interviews. Make sure you include interviews that show different sides of the story (at least two people with different opinions or viewpoints).

##### **Piece to camera**

A 'piece to camera' is where the reporter on the scene speaks directly to the camera to explain part of the story. Consider including a piece to camera by a reporter in your script.

#### **Remember to check:**

- Are the most important facts first and the less important information last?
- Have you covered
  - » setting the scene
  - » identifying the issue
  - » addressing the issue
- Have you included an interview with at least two people who have different opinions on the issue?
- Have you checked your spelling, punctuation and grammar?

#### **NEXT: Conducting interviews**