FORMAT AND POINTERS FOR WRITING A PRESS RELEASE

Indent paragraphs and double space lines. Use the 5 W's and an H (who, what, when, why, where, how). Make it readable by using short sentences, short paragraphs, easy words, personal words, and active verbs.

Keep sentences short. For today's mass audiences, news stories averaging between 15 and 20 words per sentence are easy reading. Sentences longer than 30 words may be hard to understand. Action verbs keep a story moving and "grab" the reader more than "to be" verbs that show little action.

Keep paragraphs short and vary them from one to five average sentences. Remember a 100-word paragraph looks mighty long in a narrow newspaper column. Editors don't like them. Neither do readers.

-More-
Use short, simple words in place of longer, many-syllable words with the same meaning. When a technical or difficult word must be used, explain it as simply as possible. Quotes and words like "you" or a person's name add human interest. This kind of personalization is used more often in "feature" rather than "hard" news stories, but is a good technique for holding reader interest.

Remember that most people whiz through newspapers, reading headlines and maybe the first paragraph or two. So, get your important facts into the first paragraph; the first sentence is even better.

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