How to Write

More Gooder

A guide for union newsletter editors

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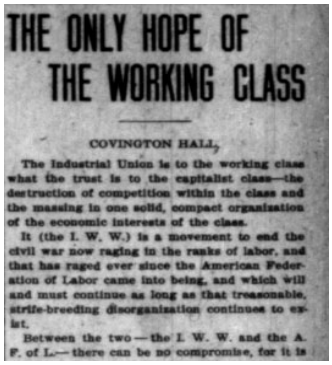

THE ONLY HOPE OF THE WORKING CLASS

COVINGTON HALL,

The Industrial Union is to the working class what the trust is to the capitalist class—the destruction of competition within the class and the massing in one solid, compact organization of the economic interests of the class.

It (the I. W. W.) is a movement to end the civil war now raging in the ranks of labor, and that has raged ever since the American Federation of Labor came into being, and which will and must continue as long as that treasonable, strife-breeding disorganization continues to exist.

Between the two — the I. W. W. and the A. F. of L.— there can be no compromise, for it is

Writing for a union newsletter is a huge responsibility and an exciting challenge. Research shows that a majority of union members expect their local unions to be sources of important information, and that members are likely read local publications even more closely than national ones. Every time you write for your newsletter, you have the chance to contribute to:

- building your local union's solidarity and power.
- educating workers about rights.
- solving workplace problems.
- raising workers' consciousness of key political and economic issues.
- calling workers to action to improve their workplaces and their lives.

With this much at stake, it's crucial to create clear and effective written communication with your members. Have you said what you want to say in a way that will connect with your readers? Will readers be compelled to read the articles you write? And will they understand your main points?

A few basic principles of news writing can help you reach the goal of clear communication. This booklet provides some basic news writing and editing tips along with guidelines for developing news and feature stories from scratch.

The best way to learn to "write gooder," however, is simply to write (and read) more. The more you write, the more you develop your own writing process; the more you read and reread (both your own and others' writing), the more you develop your critical editorial skills. To learn to "write gooder" for a union newsletter, it's especially helpful to write and read more about labor issues. Spending time reading fellow editors' publications, labor news, labor blogs, and political coverage will all contribute to the development of your own writing.

Almost all good writing emerges through a process of *brainstorming, outlining, drafting, reading, and rewriting*. Reading your drafts carefully, having others read your drafts and give you feedback, and allowing yourself time to rewrite is the most important step in crafting a compelling news story. Then as a final step, editing for clarity and confusing sentences (along with mechanics like spelling errors or missing punctuation) can help your writing become clearer and remove distractions and obstacles that may keep your readers from continuing to read.

Lastly, as you work on your writing, *don't start by worrying about perfection or "rules*." There are no "rules" for good writing, only conventions and choices that may make a piece of writing easier or harder to read, less or more effective, memorable, or powerful. The important thing is to write and rewrite, to ask others to read and give feedback on your work, and to do it often!

Part 1: Basic News-Writing Tips

Tip #1: Use short sentences

Since clarity and easy reading are the goals in most news stories, most journalists striveto write short sentences that readers can understand quickly. Long-winded sentences with 20 or more words can usually be broken into two or three shorter sentences. Using short sentences will also greatly simplify punctuation.

First draft
If there are any items that require further explanation or raise additional questions, local leadership would be glad to discuss the items with you by telephone.

Second draft
If you have questions, please call the local president.

First draft
High-quality union education programs are a necessary precondition for facilitation and enhancement of the union stewards' essential skills and abilities.

Second draft
Union stewards need high quality labor education programs to develop essential skills.

First draft
At the union meeting, Mike Johnson explained the details of management's latest proposal including a discussion of the new overtime language and fielding questions from the membership.

Second draft
At the union meeting, Mike Johnson explained management's latest proposal. He discussed the new overtime language and answered questions from members.

Exercise: Rewrite the following sentences

1. *At last month's union meeting there was a long and sometimes heated debate over Ned Newsreader's motion to send Jana Journalist, our union's long time newsletter editor, to the Labor Press Association conference in Las Vegas, Nevada, this coming August.*

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. *Last week over one thousand area union members traveled to Washington, D.C., to meet with their Senators and Representatives to lobby for the Employee Free Choice Act, a bill that would help to restore workers' rights to organize in the United States.*

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Tip #2: Use short paragraphs

Skimming through a newspaper, you'll notice that the paragraphs tend to be very short, often containing only two or three sentences. The reason for this is that, like shorter sentences, shorter paragraphs are easier to read.

When to start and stop a paragraph depends on its content. A good guideline is to start a new paragraph for each new idea or concept. All sentences in a paragraph should relate to same idea or topic. When quoting people, it's usually best to start a new paragraph each time the speaker changes, unless the two speakers are speaking to each other or about the same topic.

First draft

At the union meeting, Local President Mike Johnson explained management's latest proposal on overtime distribution. He explained the proposal and fielded questions from the members. A motion was passed to hand out copies of the proposal to every member on Thursday, August 6th. Johnson also asked for suggestions on where to hold this year's union picnic. Darla Sanchez suggested Pleasant Creek Park and everyone liked the idea. A motion was later passed to hold the union picnic at Pleasant Creek Park.

Second draft

At the union meeting, Local President Mike Johnson explained management's latest proposal on overtime distribution. He answered questions from members. Members passed a motion to hand out copies of the proposal to every member on Thursday, August 6th.

Johnson also asked for suggestions on where to hold this year's union picnic. Darla Sanchez suggested Pleasant Creek Park and everyone liked the idea. Later, members voted to hold the union picnic at Pleasant Creek Park.

All of the sentences above deal with topics discussed at a recent union meeting, but there is an obvious breaking point. The first few sentences deal with management's latest proposal on overtime distribution and the last three sentences deal with the union picnic. Splitting the paragraph into two makes easier to read and signals to readers when to be prepared to read about a new topic.

Exercise: Rewrite the following sentences and place into paragraphs.

There was a lot of discussion at last week's union meeting about the most recent grievance filed over management's vacation scheduling restrictions and whether or not to purchase a new computer for the local union. Sara Jarvis, chief steward, said that the grievance was in no way an easy win for the union, but that based on past practice she believed the union had a strong case. Jarvis said that the first step grievance meeting is scheduled for August 8 at 3:00 p.m. John Hansen, local treasurer, reported on the costs of a new computer. After comparing prices and features, he said that the union could purchase a new computer for $1,575 without software, but with a newer processor able to handle any of the software the local would need to purchase. Later a motion passed to spend up to $1,600 on a new computer for the local union.

Tip #3: Avoid long, wordy phrases and "corporate-speak"

Avoid long, wordy phrases
Using familiar words and clear, short phrases doesn't mean "dumbing down" a message. Instead the idea is to make your writing understandable and readable. One of your first editing tasks with any news article should be to look for extra, unnecessary words and cut them out or substitute shorter, clearer alternatives.

Avoid corporate-speak
American English today is full of "buzzwords" and other pretentious sounding phrases that sound technical, but are really just gimmicks made up to impress people, to sell a product, or to hide something. Often these "buzzwords" originate in bureaucracies or business culture where public relations, marketing, or legal specialists work full-time to come up with language that masks power relations and inequalities. The job of a union newsletter editor is to *unmask* these power relations and to cut to the truth. One step in this process is to avoid using corporate-speak yourself. Or, if management has come up with a new "buzzword" to describe something in your workplace, you might want to write an article exposing what the new term really means!

Use union-speak instead
If your primary audience is your membership, it is ok (and often effective) to use specialized terms that you are confident your readers will understand. For example, "steward" is a term that most union members will understand even though the general public may not. But be careful not to assume too much, and always have in mind new members as possible readers. Do all members really know what "solidarity" or "past practice" or "arbitration" means? When in doubt about whether all readers will understand a term, explain it. In fact, entertaining explanations of basic union terminology can make for great newsletter articles.

Examples: Alternatives to wordy phrases or corporate buzzwords

Wordy Phrase	Alternative		Buzzword	Alternative
in the event that	If		outside the box	Creative
in many cases	Often		24/7	continuously, day and night
in spite of the fact	though, although		synergy	working together, combined action
during such time	While		out of the loop	Uninformed
as per your request	as requested		best practice	better approach or method
at this point in time	Now		game plan	Plan
at such time	When		touch base	meet, talk, get back
the reason is that	Because		Proactive	acting, taking action
in a timely manner	Promptly		win-win	beneficial to both parties
come to an end	End		team player	works well with others

Exercise: Rewrite the following sentences replacing any long, wordy phrases or corporate-speak "buzzwords" with better alternatives.

1. *It would be safe to say that the membership overwhelmingly feels opposed to management's latest offer.*

_____

_____

2. *In an effort to stem off management's goal of weakening the union, we propose to be proactive in organizing the contract workers hired in the loading department under the new just-in-time delivery program.*

_____

_____

3. *Under the terms of the contract, we are compelled to grieve management's actions so as to effect these changes in a timely manner.*

_____

_____

4. *Hearing protection should be worn if conditions are such that the Worksafe Exposure Standards are likely to be exceeded.*

_____

_____

Discussion questions

- What corporate buzzwords are most common where you work? What are these terms intended to mean? Can you create simpler alternatives for the buzzwords?
- What jargon is commonly used in your union? How can you know what terms are safe to use for your readers?

Tip #4: Use the active voice

Nearly every journalistic writing guide tells writers to use the *active voice* rather than the *passive voice.* But what does this mean?

Active voice sentences
Sentences written in the active voice clearly show who is taking a particular action. In active voice sentences, the subject (person or organization) who is the "*do-er"* is clearly identified at the beginning of the sentence. Active voice sentences emphasize that *someone is doing something.* They also clearly assign someone responsibility for a certain action.

Active voice examples:

Do-er	***Action***	***Receiver/object***
Unions	*improve*	*our society.*
The arbitrator	*sustained*	*the union's grievance.*
Members	*agreed*	*to hand out leaflets.*

Passive voice sentences
Sentences written in passive voice put things in the reverse order. They usually start with the *receiver* or object of the action and put the subject/*do-er* last or hide the *do-er* altogether. For this reason, passive voice sentences *de*emphasize action and often hide who is responsible for taking an action.

Passive voice examples:

Receiver/object	***Action***	***By whom (the do-er)***
Our society	*is improved*	*by unions.*
The union's grievance	*was sustained.*	*?*
A leafleting plan	*was agreed to at the meeting.*	*?*

Discussion questions

- Passive voice sentences are very common in legal, technical, and business writing. Why? When and why do writers choose to hide the "do-er" in their sentences?
- Most journalists and news writers strive to write active voice sentences. Why?
- In your newsletter, what messages do you think active voice vs. passive voice sentences are likely to send about your union?

Exercise: Rewrite the following sentences in the active voice.

1. *Management's latest offer was overwhelmingly opposed.*

_____

_____

2. *A counter offer will be made next week based on ideas generated at Monday's union meeting.*

_____

_____

3. *Management's failure to follow the overtime list must be grieved to protect the rights of all members.*

_____

_____

4. *Discipline may result from the inappropriate use of email at work.*

_____

_____

5. *It has been decided to start a newsletter that will be written, edited, and distributed every month.*

_____

_____

Tip #5: Use strong action verbs to paint a picture

Verbs such as *is, are, was, were,* and *has been* make your writing sound flat and bureaucratic. To turn dull into engaging writing, change *being* verbs into *doing* verbs. For example:

First draft
I was at the Labor Press Conference last week, and was able to learn a lot.

Second draft
I soaked up new knowledge at the Labor Press Conference last week.

Action verbs hold readers' attention and call up pictures in readers' minds. Particularly strong verbs relate to the five senses—touch, sight, smell, sound and taste—or to our emotions. Examples of strong verbs include: *take, fight, run, demand, build, destroy, spark, attack, or love.* Weak verbs, on the other hand, don't call to mind any particular image. For example: *employ, construct, postpone, modify, reduce, indicate, or inform.*

For example:

Weak verb sentence
Together we will develop a stronger union.

Strong verb sentence
Together we will build a stronger union.

Whenever possible, use a strong verb by itself rather than turning the verb into a noun.

For example:

Noun form	**Verb form**
Your steward will conduct an investigation.	*Your steward will investigate.*
Juan made a motion to…	*Juan moved to…*

Whenever possible, use a verb that says what you mean rather than using "not" with a verb that says the opposite of what you mean.

For example:

Negative form with "not"	*Jane's boss did not remember to ask for volunteers.*
Positive form	*Jane's boss forgot to ask for volunteers.*

More examples:

First draft

Sara showed great satisfaction as she was handed the award for Steward of the Year.

Second draft
Sara beamed as she accepted the award for Steward of the Year.

First draft
Without sufficient proof of guilt, management's decision to terminate John Nelson for sleeping on the job was improper.

Second draft
Management fired John Nelson unfairly and without evidence; no one actually saw Nelson sleeping on the job.

Exercise: Rewrite the following sentences using action verbs.

1. Martina is able to attend the Labor Press Conference next week.

_____

_____

2. By not participating in the meeting, management has hindered the bargaining process.

_____

_____

3. The termination of our union steward is a form of unlawful retaliation.

_____

_____

Part 2: Writing News Stories

What types of news stories should go into the union newsletter?

The answer to this question may depend on the editorial policy or mission of your newsletter. For example, the Iowa State Press Association has the following mission statement:

The mission of the ISLPA is

- *to inform members of events in their local union, their community, and their larger political environment.*
- *to present an alternative source of information tailored to the needs and interests of working people.*
- *to build the solidarity of the local union.*
- *to educate and mobilize members around labor's political issues and agendas.*

Discussion questions

- What direction does this mission statement provide regarding newsletter content?
- What is your newsletter's mission?
- Does your union have a policy on the types of content that should or should not appear in your newsletter?

Great ideas for news stories

Workplace problems and issues

- Background on current problems or grievances
- Issue surveys
- Member actions and mobilizations around workplace issues
- Union proposals to management to correct problems and/or Recent management actions and union responses/positions
- Education on the contract: highlights of important rights, explanation of complex policies, areas of the contract giving rise to frequent grievances, etc.
- Education on other rights: workplace health and safety, discrimination and harassment, legal rights under ADA, FMLA, etc.
- Union victories or achievements

Union members at work and in action

- Member profiles
- Interviews with members or stewards about their experience with the union or a particular issue they have experienced/worked on

- Photos: members at work, new members at first union meeting, stewards in action working on a grievance, members handing out leaflets, union social events, etc.

Local union business and news

- Issues, elections, meetings, grievances, social events, etc.
- Explanation of important votes, policies, decisions
- Surveys and education prior to contract bargaining; discussion of proposals; mobilization plans; explanation of ratification process, etc.

How the economy works for workers

- CEO salaries compared to workers' wages
- Globalization of the labor and capital markets
- Technological change as it affects your members

Politics

- Local, county, state, national issues that affect your members
- Candidate profiles
- Voting records
- Interviews with candidates
- Political participation: how to register to vote, how to participate in your local precinct caucus and county party; how to write resolutions; how to get involved in campaign work, etc.
- Party or candidate platforms: compare and contrast

Union solidarity

- What's happening to unions in other industries, other states, other workplaces in our town
- Solidarity across borders/internationally
- Solidarity in the workplace: across shifts, across teams, across departments

What makes a story newsworthy?

Many news editors consider the factors below when deciding whether a story is newsworthy. Normally, a story should perform well in at least two areas.

- **Timing:** The word news means exactly that—things which are new. Topics that are current are more likely to make good news stories. Members are used to receiving the latest updates, and are exposed to so much news that old news is quickly discarded.

- **Significance:** The number of people affected or the seriousness of an issue is a factor to consider. Contract negotiations can affect hundreds of members and result in serious long-term changes, while a disciplinary grievance may only affect one person. Give significant news stories priority in your newsletter.

- **Proximity:** Events that take place near to us have more significance. The closer the story is to home, the more newsworthy it is. But even non-local stories can be made more proximate. For example, a story about the war in Iraq can be made very newsworthy if it features a local union member called up for duty and the affect on his or her family.

- **Human Interest:** Human interest stories are a bit of a special case. They often disregard the main rules of newsworthiness; for example, they don't date as quickly, they need not affect a large number of people, and it may not matter where in the world the story takes place. Human interest stories appeal to emotion and, in a union newsletter, often connect to or illustrate union values in action.

Does your newsletter connect with members?

We all know union members (and potential members) who are represented by a union, but are not really connected to their union. That disconnection may stem in part from how *we* communicate—or fail to communicate—with *them*. Members may be unclear about what their union stands for, what their union is trying to achieve, and the relationship between their union and what they confront on the job every day.

Unfortunately, too many people see the union as a “service” that they may or may not choose to buy. Too often, they don't see the union as a collective cause that depends on their support, a movement that is relevant to the realities they face on the job every day.

Writing news stories that show the union as an agent for change can help unions connect with their members. Members and potential members want to know:

- what the union’s agenda is
- how the union’s agenda is being carried out
- how member action fits into that agenda.

Does your newsletter tell this story? Or, does it merely report on routine union business without conveying a coherent impression of what the union's mission is all about?

Below are tips to consider when considering which news stories to include in your newsletter:

1. Tell the story of an active union with "issues advocacy" as its central focus.

2. Feature member voices; let members speak in their own words about issues important to them.

3. Speak to all segments of your membership across age, classification, location, race, gender, etc.

4. Balance content that presents the union as a “service” with content that presents it as an active, engaged, group of workers struggling together for change.

5. Incorporate as many "calls to action" as you can.

6. Use photographs as "mirrors" (reflecting all segments of your membership) instead of "projectors" (showing only a handful of leaders).

7. Consider communicating more often in more manageable bites; short, leaflet-style bi-weekly updates may get read and noticed better than an important article buried in a 20-page quarterly newsletter.

Rewriting someone else’s news story

Most of us couldn’t be union newsletter editors if we didn’t borrow and use material from each other, from our national and international union press, and from the state and national AFL-CIO. Most of these sources want us to use their articles and encourage us to do so. The challenge for us is to get our members to read articles written for a different audience and on issues that may seem to be distant from the local scene.

The answer is: “rewriting.” Rewriting is more than editing. We use this term to mean taking a canned article (which you have permission to reprint) and making it exciting, relevant and readable for YOUR members.

Some basic principles of rewriting:

1. **Local focus**. Give the article a local focus or slant. Write up a paragraph which points out how this issue is relevant to your members. This may take a bit of research on your part, but many times you will easily be able to think of a local connection.

2. **Interview your members.** A great way to do this is to interview someone from your union who can comment on the issue and how it affects them, their family or department at work. Then you get the double advantage of being able to have a local person’s name in the article.

3. **Localize the headline.** Look at the headline. Can it be given a local twist?
   Example:
   Main headline of original article: *“Unemployment worsens in fourth quarter.”*
   Your “localized” rewrite of the headline: *“Jobs become harder to find in Union County.”*

Or add a subtitle with a local twist: *"400 more lose jobs in Union County"*

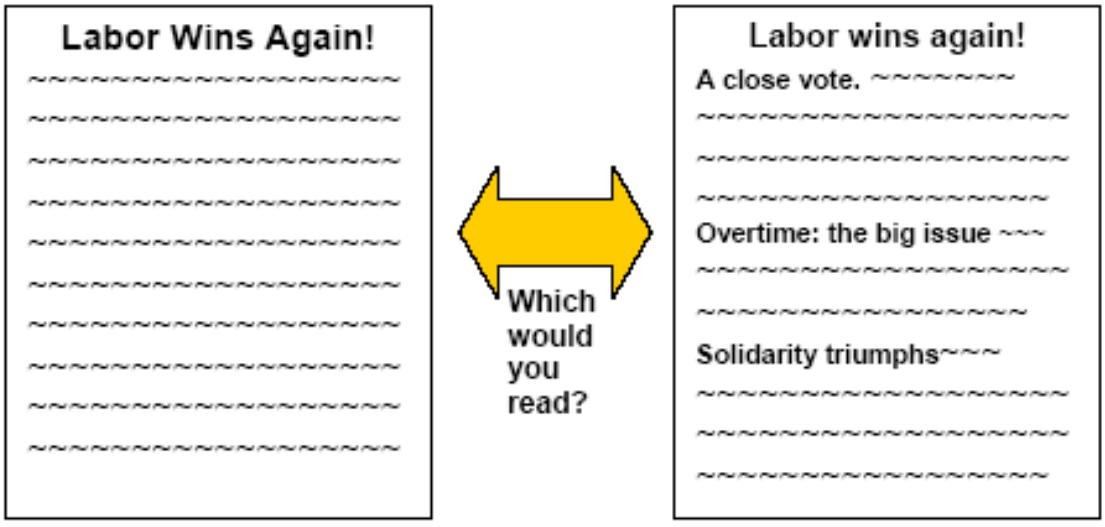
4. **Shorten it.** See if the article can be shortened while preserving the main points or the points that are most relevant for your members.

5. **Pull quotes**. Pick a sentence from the article which is especially "quotable" and put it in a box somewhere in the article. Readers will nearly always read the pull quote first. It serves as a half-open door which arouses readers' curiosity and invites them into the article as a whole.

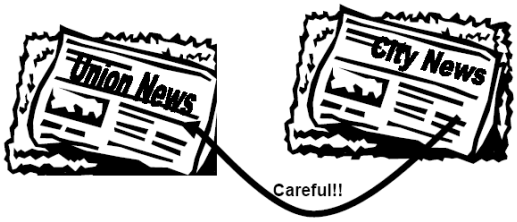
6. **Placement**. You may have (or create) a special section for political and economic articles that you can regularly reprint from other publications. Readers will know where to look for this type of information each time they get the newsletter. Consider placing key articles on a right-hand facing page for special emphasis.

7. **Graphics**. Can you find a graphic or cartoon which ties into the article?

8. **Internal headlines**. Break up an article by putting the first sentence in bold—or create your own internal headline for the paragraph and make it bold. Readers are much more likely to stick with an article which looks like a series of short, readable paragraphs.



Legal guidelines on reprinting, rewriting, and quoting from other sources[1]



Federal law protects authors from unauthorized use of their publications. Copyright owners have the exclusive right to reproduce and distribute copies of their work.
Some publications are not copyrighted and may be copied without permission. These would include many newsletters put out by other unions and organizations such as the AFL-CIO. It is still wise to check this before using the material. If you do use borrowed materials, be sure to give credit to the original publication.

In order to legally reprint an article from a book, magazine, or newspaper that *is* copyrighted, you must call, or preferably write, and obtain permission to do so. You need to tell them what material you wish to copy and how it will be used.

Frequently such permission is readily granted for non-profit purposes, but certain guidelines may accompany that permission. For example, the *Des Moines Register* requires that only entire articles may be reprinted, and no "highlighting" of any type may be added. Check with the daily paper in your area. Think twice before "borrowing" without asking. If a news outlet is hostile to your goals and keeps its eye on your activities, they're sure to holler when you reprint without permission. Always credit original sources and reproduce all copyright lines.

In some instances you may be able to obtain "blanket permission" to copy articles on an on-going basis from a given publication without having to ask each time. Again, you must designate the original source in your reprint.

It is also possible, and often more effective, to use the ideas and facts presented in an article or chart if you put the information into your own words. Permission is not needed to do this. You can also insert a direct quotation if it is not longer than two or three paragraphs taken from a long article and credit is given to the source.

Since U.S. law is vague about "fair use," whether you're safe reprinting something may also depend on the context in which you intend to use it. If you borrow a cartoon from a national magazine for a non-profit newsletter handed to a group of neighbors, chances are the big-timers won't know about it and won't care.

The bigger your circulation, the more careful you should be. Many copyright owners worry only about commercial reprints. So if your paper's a money maker, watch out. And don't sneak copyrighted cartoons into ads.

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1 Material in this section was borrowed and modified with permission from Nancy Brigham, *How to do Leaflets, Newsletters and Newspapers*, 1991.

Preparing to write a news story

This basic crux of all news is that you need to answer the “five Ws”:

Who? What? Where? When? Why?

If you aren’t able to answer these five questions when you start outlining a story, then some research, investigation, and/or interviewing may be necessary.

Interviews

One of the most basic investigative techniques is the interview. Talking to people at work, at union meetings, or at political and social events, is always a way to liven up your newsletter. People are always interested in what other people have to say, and most people love to see their names in print—provided their words are reported accurately!

Interviewing tips:

- **Ask the “five w’s.”** First-hand witnesses or participants are always the best, most direct source of information for a news story. Has a member gone to convention? Participated on a picket line? Worked phone banks in a recent get out the vote effort? Ask them about their experiences or even to tell their story directly in 2 or 3 paragraphs.

- **Treat the other person with courtesy and respect** and remain calm and professional. After opening the discussion with brief casual conversation, introduce the subject of the interview in a natural manner.

- **Allow the person to describe the event without interruption.** Then, review the story with the individual, checking it for accuracy and completeness, and asking any necessary follow-up questions.

- **Take notes.** Before taking out a notebook, however, first explain the necessity of keeping a written record so that the interviewee will not become tense or cease talking. Use a new sheet of the notebook for each interview.

- **Record all key statements in the exact words** the person uses, and decide later what facts are irrelevant and can be omitted from the report.

- **Ask one question at a time** and make all necessary notes on the answer before moving on to the next question. Use open-ended questions to encourage the individual to respond with details rather than short, "yes" or "no" answers.

  Example:

Closed-ended question: Did you vote in last week's election?
Open-ended question: How did you decide who to vote for last week?

- **Do not erase any information** obtained in an interview, even if the interviewee gives conflicting details. If the person makes a contradictory statement, draw a line through the original statement, leaving it readable, and write in the change.

- **Edit quotations later—with permission!** If you need to change a quotation—to make it more on target, to correct errors, etc.—always be sure to check with the person you are quoting. Nothing makes someone more irritated than to be misquoted. But people are usually happy to have an alert editor catch an error and give them a chance to correct it before it appears in print.

- **Collect one-liners and quotable quotes.** Always be alert for quotable one-liners, whether you are chatting with people in the workplace or listening to a speech or sermon. These can often be used as "pull quotes" featured in boxes and large font, often with a picture of the speaker

Tips on taking notes:

- Use a notebook, which keeps all your notes in one place. You can carry a small notebook with you at all times in case you observe or hear something to report on.
- Use short lists, words and phrases instead of complete sentences, except when taking down quotes (which should be taken down exactly).
- Use a ball-point pen, rather than a pencil, to prevent smearing and fading.
- Write legibly, making certain that names, titles, and departments are spelled correctly.
- Record details about separate items or from separate interviews under separate headings, and print out names in capital letters.
- Keep all notes about a specific issue together in one section of the notebook.

Remember – accuracy is a must!
Union members will read a union newsletter that is both interesting and trustworthy. Inaccuracies, misquotes or misleading information can destroy the trust between a union and its members. For many, the union newsletter is the voice of the union – so take care to project an honest and accurate message.

Drafting a lead

The lead is the opening sentence (or perhaps two) of a news story. It is the most important part of a news story. The lead gives the reader a clear idea of what the article is about and helps the reader decide whether to read more or stop. An interesting lead hooks the reader, while a boring or confusing lead will push them away. Leads often summarize the essential elements of the story, giving a preview of what's to come.

The lead should answer all or most of the "five w's." One basic formula for writing a lead sentence is as follows:

[Who] + [**What]** (what happened – usually a verb)
+
[**When]** + [**Where]**
+
[**Why]** (the "why" is optional and may be discussed later in the articles)

Examples:

One sentence lead:
[Who] *Local 1 activists* **[What]** *signed up 15 new hires* **[When]** *this month* **[Where]** *in the newly organized service department* **[Why]** *sending management the message that "Local 1 is strong and getting stronger."*

Lead paragraph:
[Who] *Iowa Senator Tom Harkin* **[What]** *promised 200 Postal Workers he would continue the fight for the Employee Free Choice Act. Harkin made the announcement* **[When and Where]** *at the August Iowa APWU Convention in Des Moines.*

Checklist for writing leads
If you answer "No" to any of the following questions, you should rewrite your lead.

— Is it specific (rather than vague or abstract)?
— Is it concise? (No more than 3 lines typed)
— Does it begin with the news? (If you began with the time and place it occurred, rewrite it!)
— Does it emphasize the most interesting and important aspect of the story—the main thing that happened?
— If it originated in a distant city, did you begin with a dateline?
— Have you used a relatively simple sentence structure, avoiding a long beginning clause or phrase?
— Has it been localized?
— If you used a question, is it short, simple and provocative?

— If you used a quotation, does it adequately summarize the story?
— Does your lead state or suggest the story's importance and its impact on your readers?
— Have you double-checked all facts in your lead to be sure they are correct, and not exaggerated or inaccurate?

Things to avoid when writing leads:

- Don't lead with a prepositional phrase.
- Don't start a lead with a person's name unless they are a well-known public figure.
- Don't start with the "where" and "when"; instead feature the "who" and the "what" first.
- Don't start with an official source's name.
- **Don't bury the lead**! That is, don't put the most important information deep in the article.

Examples of leads:

First draft
According to the Department of Labor, unemployment rose to four percent…

Second draft
Unemployment rose to four percent this month according to the Department of Labor.

First draft
Over the weekend, union members and supporters stepped up picketing.

Second draft
Union picket lines doubled in size over the weekend.

First draft
"Management clearly doesn't care about our safety." These words from union steward Sue Travers at Thursday's membership meeting say it all. We have seen three serious injuries occur just in the last week.

Second draft
Three serious workplace injuries in the past week are provoking strong responses from Local 1 members. At Thursday's membership meeting, union steward Sue Travers declared that "Management clearly doesn't care about our safety."

Exercise: Rewrite the following leads:

1. On August 5-6, 2007, Martina Smith attended the Labor Press Conference in Reno, Nevada. At the event, Smith learned how to write interesting news stories and more effective leads. Smith, who recently agreed to serve as the Local 1 newsletter editor, plans to incorporate these lessons into the Local 1 newsletter.

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2. According to Fred Kruger, Postmaster, the downtown branch will add 25 new postal worker jobs in September.

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3. The arbitrator in the Johnson termination grievance issued her decision on August 2nd. In the decision, the arbitrator ruled that "the employer failed to prove that it had just cause to terminate Mike Johnson." The arbitrator ordered the employer to immediately reinstate Johnson with back pay and benefits.

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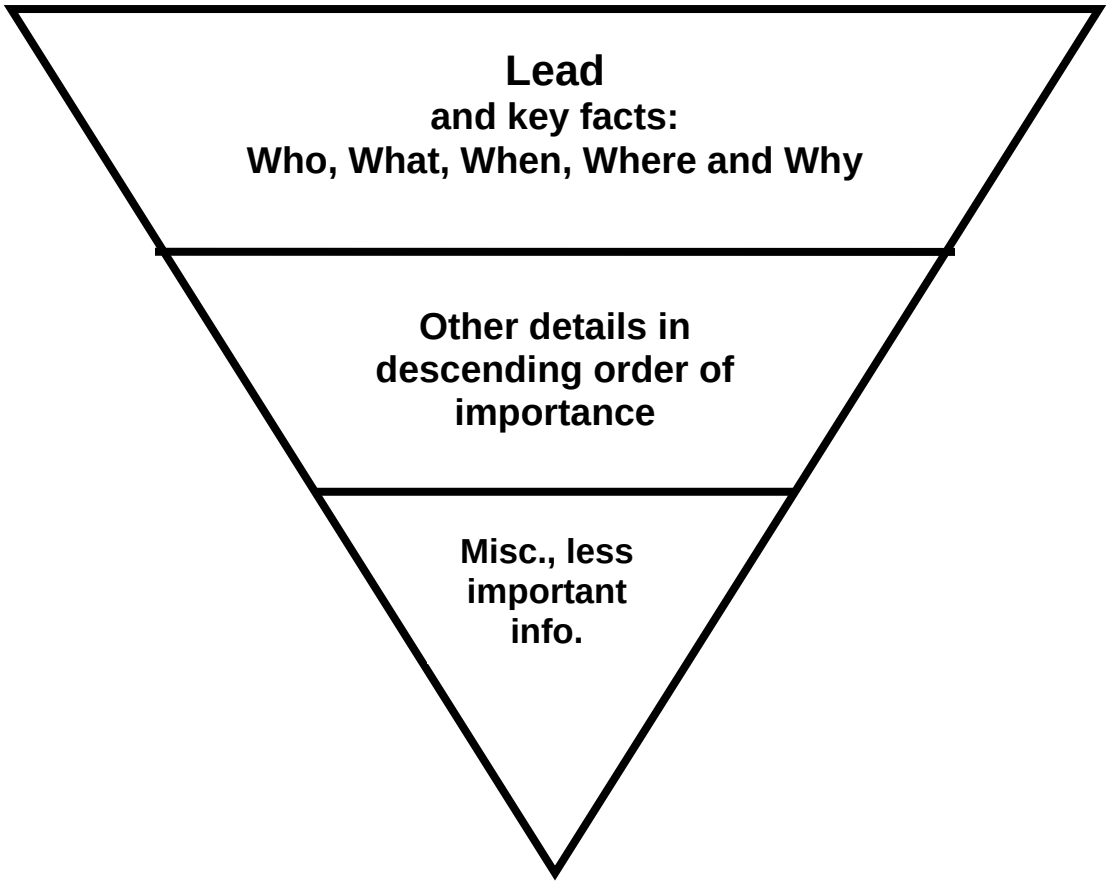
Organizing a news story using the “inverted pyramid”

Many journalists use the image of an “inverted pyramid” to describe how to organize information into a news story. The idea is to place the most important information at the top of the pyramid and less important information towards the bottom.

The article should begin with the information that is most essential and most likely to catch readers’ attention. These first few sentences answer the basic questions of who, what, when, where and why. After reading these first sentences, a reader who is “skimming” the publication should be able to move on to other articles while still having gotten the essence of the information.

The body of the article that follows provides new details to the reader in descending order of importance. Sometimes it’s helpful to divide the body of the article into topical sections that appear in order of their importance.

Final sections contain the least important information. You can assume that only the most dedicated readers will read all the way through every article. Unlike novels and essays, news stories do not need to end with grand conclusions. Once a news story contains all the pertinent information you have to include, just stop writing. Sometimes you can end a news story with an unusual or intriguing fact that may not be important or central to the story, but adds final interest to the story.



Exercise: Arrange the following sentences (by number) into a news story utilizing the inverted pyramid approach:

1. The incident allegedly occurred when a bus, which had just left Drummond's coal mine carrying some 50 workers, was stopped by gunmen, who forced two union leaders off.

2. They shot one on the spot, pumping four bullets into his head and dragged the other one off to be tortured and killed.

3. Now, in a civil trial set to begin today before a federal jury in Birmingham, Ala., union lawyers have presented affidavits from two people who allege that the Drummond Co. ordered the murder of two union leaders who worked at its coal mine in Colombia, a charge Drummond denies.

4. The suit is filed under a law that allows foreigners to sue U.S. companies here.

5. The United Steelworkers (USW), representing 1.2 million workers in the United States, and Unite, representing 2 million workers in the United Kingdom, took on the cause of Colombian unionists as one of their first joint actions following the unions' agreement in April to form a merger exploratory committee.

6. As the Associated Press reports: Multinationals operating in Colombia have admitted paying right-wing militias known as paramilitaries to protect their operations.

7. But human rights activists claim the companies went further, using the fighters to violently keep their labor costs down. The Drummond case, they say, is their best chance yet of seeing those allegations heard in court.

8. Colombia is the deadliest place for unionists—some 2,300 union leaders have been killed there since 1991 and only 37 people have been convicted in the murders.

Exercise: Choose one of the following topics and interview a fellow union member about it:

- a grievance they filed
- a bargaining experience
- a political event in which they participated
- a union organizing effort

Take notes on your interview:

Now organize the facts and quotations from your notes into an outline organized according to the “inverted pyramid” structure:

I. Information to include in lead sentence/paragraph

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

II. Important details and explanation (in order of importance)

_____

_____

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III. Secondary details and less important information (to include only if space allows)

_____

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_____

_____

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_____

Crafting headlines


STRIKE CALLED
ALL UNIONS TO GO OUT
Seattle Union Record
SIXTY THOUSAND TO RESPOND TO CALL
NO CONSTRUCTIVE LEGISLATION YET
ANNOUNCEMENT OF STRIKE

A story's headline usually determines whether a reader will read any or none of the story. So a headline must grab the reader's interest, attention, and curiosity—and do it in no more that 3 to 10 words!

It is usually easiest to write the headline *last*, after you have finished writing and editing the article. When you finish an article, or get one from a contributor, read it over with a special eye to writing the headline. What is especially important or exciting about the article? What is the ONE THING that this article is mainly about?

Headline basics

- **Keep it short.** Headlines should be no more than ten words long and usually do not need to be complete sentences.

- **Make it punchy.** A good headline should be hard-hitting and direct. Don't meander around the topic. Get it out and done with.

- **Use the KISS approach**: keep it simple and short! Short words, simple construction, and no convoluted thoughts and meanings.

- **Target the "one thing."** Make sure the central, most important message in the article comes across loud and clear.

- **Avoid cute but confusing headlines.** If a headline provokes readers' interest but does not accurately indicate what a story is about, it will frustrate readers whose expectations may be disappointed when they begin reading what's actually in the article. Lots of such headlines may lose you the "trust" of your readers.

- **Use a sub-heading if you need to explain**. Sometimes you can grab attention in the headline and then explain the "one thing" in a subhead. The headline grabs you; the subhead explains. If you use this approach, the headline should be short and bold; the subhead more explanatory.

- **Always use the present tense,** even if what you're talking about has already happened. "Union wins big" rather than "The union had a big victory."

- **Be active**. Use verbs and talk about events as actions, not as static finished products.

- **Be big and bold.** Set the headlines in larger font size and use bold type face.

- **Use lower case letters.** Usually, for easiest reading, only the first word and proper nouns should be capitalized (unless your headline is very, very short and you want

to use all caps for extra emphasis). Not “CONTRACTOR’S ASSOCIATION CREATES VIOLENCE STUDY GROUP” or “Contractor’s Association Creates Violence Study Group” but “Contractor’s Association creates violence study group.”

- **Watch out for double meanings**. If you don’t want to end up on a late-night tv show’s favorite headlines sketch, make sure to avoid double meanings. For example, “New Post Master proposes to cut downtown postal workers in half.”

Headline examples

First draft
Comments from AFL-CIO President John Sweeney on why he believes workers deserve higher wages and cost of living adjustments

Second draft
AFL-CIO President calls employer wage proposals “insulting”

First draft
Management shows slash and burn approach with new automation

Second draft
Slash and burn: Management’s approach to automation

First draft
The survey process gets under way

Second draft
Union bargaining team seeks YOUR input

First draft
Grievance report

Second draft
Union wins arbitration case

First draft
Teonta Williams, COPE committee chair, reports that Local 1 raised a record $1,500 at the union picnic for the national union’s Congressional Campaign Fund

Second draft
Local 1 smashes COPE fundraising record

Exercise: Rewrite the following headlines

1. Local 1's voter registration drive started on August 1st

_____

_____

_____

2. Local President retires after 30 years at union meeting

_____

_____

_____

3. Management stalling tactics are impacting the grievance procedure

_____

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_____

4. Press Association President says that nobody works as hard as union newsletter editors and thanks them for their service to the labor movement

_____

_____

_____

Part 3: Writing a Feature Story

What's a feature story?
A feature goes much deeper into an issue than does a traditional news story. Features often contain analysis of an issue rather than just the facts. Features can run up to 10,000 words in length in some newspapers. To write an effective feature, it's important to have a clear idea of what you are going to write about—and what specific angle you will explore—as you get started.

Story mapping: A tool for preparing to write a feature story.
Story mapping can keep you from wasting a lot of time doing research that you won't be able to use. Here's an example of how to focus a feature by using the technique of story mapping.

Suppose you want to write about *the prevalence of cumulative trauma injuries* (like carpal tunnel syndrome) in your field. This provides a general story idea, but what exactly are you going to write about?

For every general story idea, there are many angles, or ways the story can be handled. For instance, a story about carpal tunnel syndrome could address: the causes of the condition, impact on worker lives, lack of an ergonomics standard addressing the issue, how the union safety committee is addressing the issue, or new treatment options for workers….the list goes on and on. If you try to cover everything, you will have zero focus. Without a clear angle, the likely result after lots of hard work will be one big mess!

Narrow your idea down to a few main sub-topics. Choose sub-topics that relate logically, and you will find it easier to focus your story. For example, to write a feature on carpal tunnel syndrome, you might choose to focus on the prevalence of the problem where you work, how union members have been affected by the problem and how the union is advocating for new safety protections that will address the problem.

Your next step is to **brainstorm as many angles as you can within each sub-topic.** What possible details are there to touch upon?
➔ List ideas related to *prevalence of carpal tunnel at your workplace*: OSHA 300 data and first report of injury reports, how many workers and in which work areas, lost time days, and medical claims.
➔ List ideas related to *how union members affected by the problem*: time off work, lost wages, pain and suffering, job restrictions and transfers, and stories from affected workers.
➔ List ideas related to *how the union safety committee is advocating for new safety protections*: what's the local union safety committee doing, grievances or OSHA complaints filed, educating members on safety rights and protections, national union efforts seeking ergonomics standard and etc.

Based on the angles you come up with, decide what the main angle for your story is. The carpal tunnel syndrome story's main focus could be to explain the issue through the eyes of a union steward who filed an OSHA complaint against the employer for failing to provide a safe workplace free from known safety hazards.

Suddenly, you have an interesting story about a dedicated union activist's struggle to make the workplace safer. It's straightforward, and will be relatively easy to write because you know where you want to go, and what types of information you'll need to take you there.

What's next?
Go out and get the information. You will need to do some research, talk to people on the phone and set up your key face-to-face interviews. Set up an interview with the union steward you plan to feature. Talk with workers you know who have suffered carpal tunnel syndrome. Meet with the union safety committee to ask questions and collect information from OSHA 300 logs, incident reports and other documents.

The entire time you are doing your research, REMEMBER TO KEEP YOUR FOCUS. Keep asking yourself what information you really need. When you get extra information (which you most certainly will), don't get bogged down and distracted by it. If you stay true to your focus, you will spend your time and energy doing research efficiently.

It's Time to Write!
Features are the most interesting news stories to write. You are free to use colorful language and have more freedom to express yourself. Whereas hard news stories concentrate on "just the facts," feature stories sidestep those limitations. This is where you get to show off and be creative as a writer. Test your limits; push your use of language and your ability to set a scene.

There's no one right way to write, and there's no single best way for you to tell your story, so trust yourself…and try to come up with an original and effective approach. The more work you put into story development and research, the more you can go with the flow of your notes when you actually sit down and write the feature.

Try to make your reader feel like they are there. *Your writing can trigger all five senses!* You can think of a feature story as a series of mental images, presented one after the other.

Consider the story about the union steward who's filed an OSHA complaint stemming from the carpal tunnel syndrome problem. A great feature will put the reader INSIDE the mind of the union steward – *why is this issue so important to her, what caused her to take the issue to OSHA, what does she hope to accomplish, what's next and how does this connect with other things the union is doing.*

What's the point of your story?
In a feature story, you have some room to develop your ideas and your characters (much like in a play or a short story). You **don't** have to start with a lead that summarizes the whole piece.

If you create a vivid atmosphere for your readers, it can be very effective to have your characters narrate the story as they see it. Say the carpal tunnel story starts off with the union steward walking with the OSHA inspector conducting an investigation. Describe the scene as the OSHA inspector first visits with local management and the union steward: management's reaction, the inspector's questions, the steward's demeanor and tone. The description ends with the walk-around-inspection and the steward takes over telling the story in her own words. By sharing some details about other aspects of the complaint, and quoting other union safety activists, the whole feature can unfold within the atmosphere of the inspection day. Just be sure that whatever approach you use allows you to stay with the initial idea and main sub-topics.

Your role as a feature writer is that of narrator. You take all the pieces of information that you've assembled and decide how to put them together. Build a complete jigsaw puzzle, using your own perspective to envision and then assess the final result. You are there to fairly and accurately represent different people and ideas from a union perspective, and to challenge the reader to draw their own conclusions about who and what to believe.

End the feature story with a call to action. When writing a feature story about anything related to the union, it's almost always appropriate to end the feature with a call to action. What can the reader do to work for change, to build the union or to help the subject of the feature story? Readers who take the time to read a feature story are likely to care enough to want to act and become involved, and as a union feature writer, you need to give them a way to become more involved.

Exercise – Read the <u>provided</u> feature story and answer the following questions:

1. What is the feature about – the main focus of the story?

2. Cite <u>three</u> major sub-topics, or angles, used to explore aspects of the main idea.

3. For each of the above three sub-topics, cite one piece of evidence the author includes as support. Hint: look for facts or quotes.

4. Cite two sentences where the author uses descriptive, evocative language.

5. List two people that the story quotes, and why they are qualified to serve as appropriate references and sources of authority.

6. Cite the sentence that you think is weakest. Hint: Look for something that is unrelated to the main focus of the story.

7. Comment on something you like about the writer's style.

Exercise: Story mapping

Story mapping is a great way to generate an overview and outline for a story you want to write. Try this exercise in the first steps of story mapping to help get started.

1. What are some general ideas for stories that you could write about? List at least three.

2. Settle on one of the ideas, and cross out the others. Now, brainstorm sub-topics and ideas or things that relate to your main idea. Write down as many “angles” as possible that could be used to tell your story.

3. List the three or four important related ideas from the above list, and then repeat the brainstorming process: try to come up with as many sub-topics for each of them as you can.

4. Write down three people or organizations you could contact in order to get quotes or information that would address important sub-topics you have brainstormed.

5. PIck one sub-topic to eliminate because it shifts the focus to a different angle.

6. What is the most important sub-topic you have identified—the one that you think will be a (or the) major theme in your story?

Part 4: Editing

Editing refers to what we've been doing throughout this manual: reading closely and asking ourselves whether material is clear, gets and holds attention, doesn't confuse, and makes its point. Then revising and rewriting until what we read fulfills all these goals.

For local union newsletter editors, editing also involves creating a consistent voice and a political direction for your newsletter that meshes with your local union's mission and goals.

Basic editing guidelines

- Whenever possible, let some time pass between writing and editing. Let your article sit for at least a few hours, or even better a day or two if you can.

- First, read the newsletter yourself. Then hand it off to another reader and ask for feedback. "Fresh eyes" will almost always see things that you cannot. If questions of appropriateness or accuracy arise, always have another union leader take a look too. Remember that as editor it is always your job to have the interests of the union in mind when deciding what writing to publish and what needs revision.

- Read your article out loud to yourself. Reading aloud forces you to slow down and notice mistakes, and listening with your ear will give you perspective on tone and style choices.

- When editing someone else's writing, don't hesitate to suggest changes, and go ahead and make obvious grammar/spelling corrections, but don't make major changes without consulting with the author first. If you need to make a large number of changes to make something more readable, go ahead and do so and then let the author read it over before printing it.

- Ask yourself some key questions while reading:[2]
  1) Did you understand it all the way through?
  2) Can you tell what the main point of the story is?
  3) Do you find yourself reading a sentence twice?
  4) Does the story put you in the mood the writer intends?
  5) Are there words you don't understand? Ask the writer to replace them.
  6) Does the writing sound as natural as someone talking to you?
  7) Does the article raise questions that are left hanging?

2 Nancy Brigham, *How to Do Leaflets, Newsletters & Newspapers*, 123.

Copy editing

Once you have finalized the content of your articles, copy editing—reviewing your newsletter for mistakes and misspellings, checking styles, fonts, etc.— is the last step before publication.

Copy editing is important in that minor errors can sometimes make a significant difference, but on the other hand, don't let concerns about minor grammar or punctuation mistakes get in the way of putting out your newsletter. Remember that your main goal is to get your message across. If your readers can understand what you are saying, you have accomplished this goal.

Copy editing tips

- Always let an article sit for a while before you read it for the last time.
- Use the "Spell-check" function on your computer's word processor, but don't expect it to catch everything (e.g., it's not going to know the difference between "there" and "their"). If in doubt, look it up in the dictionary!
- Read the text out loud one last time to yourself. This will force you to slow down and catch errors that your eye would otherwise not see.
- Use your ear: if it "sounds wrong," it probably is.
- If you only have a limited amount of time to copy edit, pay special attention to headlines and sub-headings. These are the items that are likely to be read first and by most readers.
- It is nearly impossible to publish an entire newsletter without at least a couple of spelling errors. Don't sweat this. But DO pay extra attention to the spelling of people's names. If in doubt, double check the spelling. Nothing irritates readers more than seeing their names in print but spelled wrong.

Punctuation Basics

The following pages provide guidelines on conventions for using the most common forms of punctuation. Familiarizing yourself with punctuation can help make your writing easier to read, but don't spend too much time worrying about perfection. If you're concerned about your spelling, punctuation, or grammar skills the best way to improve these—as with other aspects of writing—is just to keep doing more and more writing and reading.

The Period

A period is used to end a sentence.

The Exclamation Point

An exclamation point is also used to end a sentence, but it also adds emphasis. Example:

Join the union today!

If you are writing dialogue that was spoken emphatically, you may want to use an exclamation point. Example:

"Fair contract now!" yelled the 200 union members attending yesterday's rally.

The Question Mark

A question mark is used to end a sentence, but only when the sentence is a question. Example:

How will management respond to our grievance?

The Comma

Now things get a little more complicated.

Commas have several uses:

1) Commas serve to separate two closely related sentences that have been combined into one sentence. Especially look for words like "and," "but," "or," etc. that connect the two sentences. The comma always comes *before* these connecting words.

Example:

Barb was tired, but she kept walking the picket line.

Exercise: Combine these two sentences into one sentence using a comma and a connecting word (and, but, or, etc.)

United we bargain. Divided we beg.

_____

Thirty-five new members joined the union this week. We are stronger than ever.

_____

2) Commas separate multiple adjectives (descriptive words) that are describing the same thing.

Example:

Our new stewards deserve a long, loud round of applause.

3) Commas separate lists of three or more nouns (things, objects, places, people, etc.) or verbs (action words).

Examples:

We will be serving chicken, cole slaw, and dessert at the Labor Day picnic.

Norma Rae walked up the driveway, took a deep breath, and knocked on the door.

Exercise: Add commas where they are needed in these sentences.

Floods storms plant closings and road closures last week left hundreds of union members out of work or even homeless. Our local union is busy locating contacting and helping members in need. Please call 555-1234 if you have time supplies or lodging to offer.

4) Commas set off subordinate clauses (short phrases that could not be stand-alone sentences) that qualify the main clause of the sentence.

Examples:

After seeing six safety violations in a week, the union safety representative called OSHA.

When she was hungry, Gabrielle took her contractually guaranteed lunch break.

If you believe in fairness, you should join the union.

5) Commas set off non-essential clauses in the middles of sentences. These commas must always be used in pairs! You should be able to “lift out” everything between the pair of commas and still be left with a sentence that makes sense.

Examples:

Nina, who is the local union president, is sitting next to you.

BUT

The woman sitting next to you is the local union president.

Note the difference between the two sentences above. In the first, the main point is that Nina is sitting next to you. The fact that she's the union president is less important. If you have commas in the right place, you should be able to remove everything between the commas and still have a coherent sentence. In this case, it would be "Nina is sitting next to you." In the second sentence, the fact that she's the union president **is** the main point of the sentence, so no comma is used.

There are three general types of word/phrase that should go between these pairs of commas:

a. Descriptive phrases that are not strictly necessary, such as "who is the local union president" in the above example.
b. Names: *"Did you know, Jason, that overtime must be rotated fairly? "*
c. Non-essential comments or qualifiers such as "however," "nevertheless," "so to speak," etc.

Exercise: Add commas to these sentences where needed.

No one works harder than our newsletter editors Brian and Margaret who keep us all informed. They cover local grievances bargaining and organizing but also keep us up to date on state and national labor issues. This is however not work we should take for granted. In our union putting out the newsletter each month takes patience skill and dedication.

6) Commas come after "he said," "she said," and other speaking verbs when they are in the middle of a spoken quotation.

Examples:

"Congressman," asked Nina, "are you listening to these workers?"

"We will continue the struggle," said Local 1 member Harold Ross, "and I believe we will win it."

Also note that after a spoken quotation, the next word should ALWAYS be uncapitalized, unless of course it is a name.

Exercise: Add correct punctuation and/or capitalization to each of the following sentences of dialogue.

“I’ll stick by you” said Norma Rae “if you stick by me.”

_____

_____

“Which side are you on” Norma Rae asked.

_____

_____

“Union yes” cried Norma Rae.

_____

_____

The Colon

A colon appears at the end of a clause and can do one of three things.

1) A colon can introduce a list. Be sure that what comes before the colon could stand as a complete sentence on its own. Example:

Newsletter editors have many skills: soliciting articles, interviewing, writing, and editing.

A colon can introduce a restatement of or elaboration on the previous sentence. Example:

Stewards are the backbone of the union: defending our contract depends on a strong steward system.

The Semicolon

A semicolon looks like this: **;** Semicolons have essentially two uses.

1) A semicolon separates items in a list when the items themselves have internal punctuation (e.g., they already have commas). Example:

Our new logo includes an orange background; black lettering; and red, yellow, and green shapes.

2) A semicolon separates two closely related clauses. In this function, it is slightly stronger than a comma, but weaker than a period. The clause before the semicolon and the clause after the semicolon should be complete sentences on their own; you should be able to replace the semicolon with a period and have two grammatically correct sentences. The previous sentence is an example. More examples:

United we bargain; divided we beg.

Ask Sarita to come to the meeting; she always brings good ideas.

The Apostrophe

An apostrophe looks like this: **'** In general, apostrophes have two uses: replacing removed letters in contractions, and indicating possession.

1) Replacing removed letters: Consider the word "isn't." We all know this is a contraction of two words, "is not." The apostrophe in "isn't" replaces the letter O in "not." Similarly, the apostrophe in "can't" replaces the letters NO in "can not," the apostrophe in "we're" replaces the letter A in "we are," and so forth.

2) Indicating possession: "This is Nina’s gavel." In this case the apostrophe does not replace a letter; it indicates possession, i.e. "This gavel belongs to Nina."

THE EXCEPTION TO THE RULE: ITS AND IT’S

The exception to the possessive rule–and the one which gives most people a lot of trouble—is the word "its" meaning "belonging to it." Unlike most possessives, "its" does not contain an apostrophe. It is just one of the many cases where the English language is unnecessarily complex. But "its/it's" is a case wherein it's good to remember Case 1 from above. If the word is "it's," ask yourself, "What letter has been removed?" The letter i from "it is" has been replaced by the apostrophe.

So, to clarify:
Its = belonging to it. "The copy machine has paper stuck in its sheet feeder."
It's = it is. "It's not my fault the copy machine is jammed!"

Exercise: Add apostrophes where necessary in the following sentences.

The unions next membership meeting takes place next Wednesday at 3:30 pm at the end of first shift. Its time for us to review bargaining proposals, and our bargaining committee needs everyones input. Theres no reason we shouldnt all attend this meeting. Please thank the committee for its hard work when you get a chance.

Exercise: Edit the draft article below

1) First, read the paragraphs silently to yourself. Strive for clarity while maintaining the message that you believe the writer intends to get across. Note any editorial changes you would make.
2) Read the paragraphs out loud while a partner next to you listens. Decide together on any additional changes you would make.
3) Do a final round of copy editing for any spelling, punctuation, grammar errors, etc.
4) Draft a headline for this article

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself as the new chief steward in local 38. I worked here five and half years. I'm excited about being Chief Steward and I am looking forward to working with all our stewards in fighting respect for our co-workers in the workplace and respect for our contract by managment.

We've herd recently from a number of co-workers who have questions about are basic rights in the workplace. We've also heard from workers who of been called into meetings with their supervisors or others and then are disciplined. When management begins to ask you questions that can lead to your discipline, you don't have to face it alone. There is help out there in the form of a *shop steward*.

Our contract outline a procedure for do process in cases of involving discipline and dismissal. These rights are further guaranteed by the Supreme court. And important concept related to due process is the principle of progressive discipline. Progressive discipline means that an employer attempts to correct an employee's problem wit ha process of notification, education, and discipline if necessary that starts less severe moving to more severe if the problems is not corrected. When an employee is dismissed the employer must show that the discipline reflect the principle of progressive discipline.

Suggested Books and Web Sites

Nancy Brigham, *How to do Leaflets, Newsletters and Newspapers* (Detroit: PEP Publishers, 1991).

Web sites

- AFL-CIO http://www.aflcio.org
- AFL-CIO Now Blog (news stories) http://blog.aflcio.org
- APWU National Postal Press Association http://www.apwupostalpress.org
- International Labor Communications Association http://www.ilcaonline.org
- Labor Arts http://www.laborarts.org
- Big Labor http://www.biglabor.com
- Union Communication Services (Graphics Services) http://www.unionist.com/graphics.htm
- Labor Beat http://www.laborbeat.org
- Labor Net www.labornet.org
- Labourstart (international) http://www.labourstart.org
- Workers Independent News http://www.laborradio.org
- ZNET Labor Watch http://www.zmag.org/LaborWatch.cfm
- XPDNC Labor Directory http://www.xpdnc.com
- United Association for Labor Education http://www.uale.org
- Workday Minnesota http://www.workdayminnesota.org
- The University of Iowa Labor Center http://www.continuetolearn.uiowa.edu/laborctr/index.htm