How is writing for the print media any different from other forms of writing? In one sense, it is no different. All writing, regardless of medium, is dictated by primarily three factors: The Message (what do you want to say?), the Audience (who do you want to say it to?) and the Sender (your own style and your intentions in sending the message).

All writing, regardless of medium, has primarily two objectives: to be understood by the audience, and to achieve its intended impact . This said, however, it is also important to understand the demands of the print medium, as distinct from other media of communication. A printed document has a permanence that other forms of mass media do not have. A newspaper has a life of a day, a newsmagazine stays alive for a week or more, but often, these forms of media are stored and retrieved at will to be read when the fancy takes one. The newspaper is organized from front to back, from beginning to end, in a linear pattern. Most people begin reading on page one but often skip through the paper to go to the sections they are particularly interested in, such as sports or business. So despite the linear organization of the paper, it is possible for readers to use it in a lateral (sideways) fashion, jumping from one page to the other at random, not necessarily in the order the pages appear.

With a newspaper, or even a magazine or any other printed document, it is possible for the reader to do this, without getting lost-a few turns of the pages and they are back to where they started! This makes it different from the Web, for instance, where people tend to get lost when they browse in a random manner. But within a publication or a section of a publication, stories are told in a linear manner, which means that readers must go from one point to the next directly, without any twists and turns along the way. However, design and layout approaches have made it possible for printed publications to create the illusion of hypertextuality (a feature of the World Wide Web that allows linking of related items in a way that lets the user go from one to the other easily), demanding new ways of writing and thinking about how to present ideas.

Marshall McLuhan called print a 'hot' medium because it demands a high level of involvement from the reader, unlike television, which provides so much stimulus at many levels that viewers do not have to do much 'work' to understand messages. The print medium also places certain constraints on those who create content for it. They must write in a certain structured manner, in a way that people can 'see' as well as 'hear' what they are talking about. The other difference stems from the technical aspect of production. Because printed publications take longer to create and disseminate than do electronic forms, those who write for the printed news media do not have the same advantage of immediacy that say, television, radio or the Internet do. The newspaper reaches us much after a news story has broken on television, so it must be written in a manner that is different, draw on a wider range of information, and answer different information needs.

There are many different types of publications, each with a distinct audience with its own needs, and therefore, many different ways to approach writing for print. We shall consider here some general characteristics of writing for print and focus on one particular genre of writing-newspaper writing. All writing depends on three major factors:

* The audience (Who are you writing for? What is their level of knowledge and interest? What is their purpose in reading this?)
* The message (What is the subject you are writing about, and what your basic purpose in sharing this information is? How much materials do you haveand what are your sources? How much time do you have to write?)
* The medium (How is the material to be presented? What are the constraints and possibilities of the medium? How do people use this medium?)

Writing for print, like most kinds of purposive communication (as distinct from communication that is primarily for self-expression, such as fiction or poetry), must focus above all on the reader. Keeping the reader in mind at all times as your approach your writing brings to the whole process a focus that will ensure that the final product does its job-to capture the reader's attention and interest and add to their understanding of a given topic or issue. This is true for all kinds of publications, whether it is a magazine for children or a journal for engineers. If you know the audience, you know the level at which you need to write, and you know how much or how little information you need to provide.

Understanding the needs of your audience makes the whole process of writing easier. This understanding dovetails into the way you treat the message, and how it shapes up immediately, you can identify what topics such an audience would find interesting and what angles within that topic would capture their interest. You also know what level of language to use, what style they would respond to, and the detail they would want or need. As you write to the needs of the audience, you must also keep in mind the characteristics of the medium you are working within. Daily newspapers demand fast work, writing that is crisp, clear and to the point. The emphasis is on facts with some room for opinion and analysis, but all presented in a very condensed format. The longest articles in the main section of a daily newspaper would be no more than 1000 words, while most are between 250 and 500 words. Magazines, on the other hand, allow for writing that is slightly more interpretive and descriptive, and also make use of more illustration in the form of illustrations and photographs that can supplement and elucidate the text. Articles may be longer and divided into sections, or an issue may be explored through several complementary stories. News and feature writing - the kind of writing that we see in daily newspapers, news magazines and special' interest magazines - demands a style and approach that is 'distinct from other forms of writing (recreational or academic/scholarly writing).

The main characteristics of such writing are:

**Accuracy**-facts are all important; there is a clear distinction between fact and opinion, between observation and hearsay.

**Brevity**-all writing must fit a given space; sentences are short, paragraphs are short, and articles are brief.

**Clarity**-everything must be clear at the first reading, as people will not spend too much time and energy on trying to understand it. Also, since the news media deal with facts and issues of current importance, it is important that things are presented in a manner that helps the public understand and participate in the dialogue.

Journalistic Writing is closely associated with the practice of reporting the news. Reporting is an art and a craft. Its skills can be taught, learned, and developed as a form of artistic expression. The modern newspaper writing style as a lead-and summary form. In this form, the news item begins with a round-up of the major facts of the story, and then summarizes subordinate facts arranged in order of decreasing importance. The final item is often described as a throw-away item because it is lowest in importance and is designed to be discarded if necessary to fit the article into the newspaper, magazine, or journal's physical news space.

A Newspaper is a collection of news stories, features, editorials and articles. A news story provides the typical hard news. It provides information in a straightforward manner. A feature appeals to the emotions. It covers all kinds of topic and provides the information in an interesting and easy-to- read manner. A feature tries to entertain while informing. Editorial provide the newspaper’s point of view. Articles, on the other hand, provide the point of view of individual writers.

As the word implies, news contain much that is new, informing people about something that has just happened. But this is not happening always as some stories run for decades and others are recycled with a gloss of newness supplied to it. News is, anything out of the ordinary, it is the current happenings. It is anything that makes the reader surprised and curious. News is anything that will make people talk. News is the issue for discussions and debates. Any event, which affects most of the people, interest most of the audiences and involves most of the people, is news. Thus, news can be called an account of the events written for the people who were unable to witness it. ‘News’ is the written, audio, or visual construction of an event or happening or an incident. The news is constantly in search of action, movements, new developments, surprises, and sudden reversals, ups and downs of fate and facts and follies of the mankind. On the surface, defining news is a simple task. News is an account of what is happening around us. It may involve current events, new initiatives or ongoing projects or issues. But a newspaper does not only print news of the day. It also prints background analysis, opinions, and human-interest stories. Choosing what's news can be harder. The reporter chooses stories from the flood of information and events happening in the world and in their community. Stories are normally selected because of their importance, emotion, impact, timeliness and interest. Note: all these factors do not have to coincide in each and every story! News report writing always starts with the most important fact. When you report on a football game, you do not start with the kick-off; you begin with the final score. A news report has a beginning, middle and an end. News stories in contrast to this will blurt out something and then explain themselves. News reports are mostly active rather than in passive voice and are written in concise language. Paragraphs are short so as to set in newspaper columns. Shorter paragraphs are more likely to keep the attention of readers. Attribution meaning ‘somebody saying something’ is used in the news- reports to present a range of views over which the reporters can appear to remain neutral.

A news report has three parts: 1. The headline 2. The first paragraph 3. The remainder of the news story The headline first attracts us. It stands out in bold black type. It message is abrupt and often startling. It makes us stop and look. It tells us quickly what the story covers. Its function is to attract our attention. Though, the headline writing belongs to the copyreader’s province and not to the reporter’s. The lead remains the primary concern of the news writer. As the present day reader is the man who both runs and reads, present day newspapers seek to facilitate his getting the information quickly. The convention has developed of telling the main facts of a news story in its first lead paragraph. Writing this lead also involves answering the questions, which would occur to any normal person when confronted with the announcement of a news story. These questions, called the five W’s are: Where? Who? What? When? Why? Suppose the news story concerns a fire. In writing the lead-the reporter would answer the questions, ‘What?’ “Fire broke out,” he would write. He would answer the question, ‘Who?’ and ‘Where?’ by telling whose premises were burnt and giving their location. He would answer “When” by telling the time the fire broke out and how long it lasted. ‘Why?”-In this case the cause the usual carelessly tossed cigarette butt. The reporter can also answer the ‘How’ in this story in several ways by describing the type of fire, or by answering ‘How much’? Here, he would estimate the probable lost and find out if premises had been covered by insurance and if so by what amount. The lead forms the springboard for the reporter’s leap into the story. The journalist should keep in mind the elements of a good lead as he may flop sadly if the lead turns out to be defective. The best way to gain journalistic facility is to practice the writing of leads. The end is the conclusion of the news reports. From the headline and the lead one comes to the rest of the story. The reporter constructs the model news story after this pattern. He selects the most important incident or fact for his lead. Then he proceeds by selecting the next most important incident, fact or detail, the next most important after that, and so on till he reaches least important phase of all. Guided by his idea of news importance, the story assumes graphically the shape of an inverted pyramid. The end will be at the peak of the inverted pyramid with the facts or incidents of least value. When writing a news story for an organization you should always retain the idea that your text is to be read and understood by others. Thus a story is like building blocks, which should be linked logically to each other. Therefore, there should be continuity between the intro, the lead and the end of the news story.

Thus, the most popular format of news writing is the Inverted Pyramid All the work of producing a news story is futile if the story does not engage the reader immediately. Writing coaches have identified four key elements that should be present in the first five paragraphs of any news story not necessarily in any particular order).

They are:

News- The newest information: the basic facts of who, what, when, where, why and how ... the most relevant information.

Impact- What a situation means and who is affected. Tells readers what the news changes about their lives and, maybe, what they should do.

Context- The general perspective that frames the background of the news. It addresses the relationship of things around the news. Context helps readers understand whether something is normal or surprising.

Emotion- The human dimension. Takes a story from abstract to reality. Offers personal elements that help readers understand the story.

Example:

The presidential debates drew a packed audience of local farmers, schoolteachers, and Internet billionaires.

Your readers will want to find out why so many people came to the event and what those different groups have in common.

Before you begin, though, review the exercises in our skills sheet to polish your writing style. Then, gather your research materials and transcripts from your interviews. List the five W's and one H Who? What? When? Where? Why? and How? and answer those questions based on the information you collected.

The next few paragraphs should elaborate on the story. Be sure to include both sides of a controversy, including quotes from as many people involved as possible. Don't forget to talk to the people who will be affected. Summarize the key information in your final paragraph and you're done. Now get to it as you're on deadline! Headlines

Now it's time to give your news story a headline. Few people have time to read all the text of every article in a newspaper, so they often skim the headlines to see if they might want to read more. Your headline is your chance — with a few wellchosen words in large type — to catch their eye.

A few rules: Use the present tense. Always use short, active verbs. There's no room to say "Faculty Members Engage in Discussions" when you can say "Teachers Talk." Don't write exactly the same thing as in your news lead; that's wasting a chance to draw readers in. In a news article, your headline should summarize straightforwardly what is most newsy about it. Don't write "Student Council Holds Meeting" when everyone knew they were going to meet; write something specific like "Council OKs Dance Theme." The best writers do it and even the simplest writing needs a revision