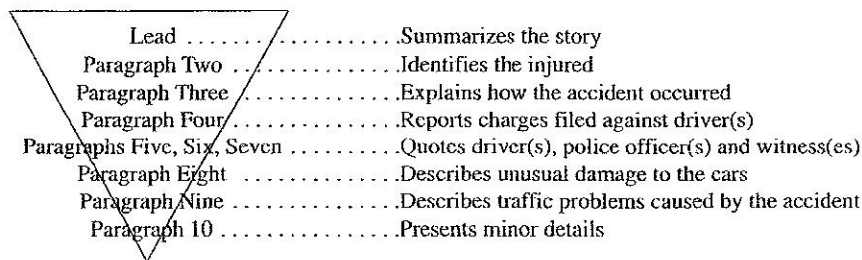


ORGANIZING THE INFORMATION

If two cars collide and several people are injured, an inverted pyramid story about the accident might contain the following sequence of paragraphs:



Normally, reporters emphasize people: what they do and what happens to them. Consequently, in the preceding example, the injuries to the people are described early in the story. Damage to the cars is less important and reported later. If the damage was not unusual, the story might not mention it. Paragraph three describes the accident itself—the recent action and main point of the story. Quotations, such as those used in paragraphs five, six and seven, add detail and color as well as a pleasing change of pace. Paragraphs eight, nine and 10 add less essential information and might be deleted if space is limited.

The exact organization of a story will vary depending on the story's unique facts and most newsworthy points. The second, third and, maybe, fourth paragraphs should provide details that develop and support the lead.

Notice how the leads in the following stories summarize their topics, and how the second and third paragraphs present their most important details. Neither story ends with a summary or conclusion; instead, the final paragraphs present the least important details. The stories are cohesive because their leads summarize the main topics and because each of the subsequent paragraphs presents additional information about those topics:

LOTHIAN—A Glen Burnie man was in serious but stable condition yesterday, a day after he fell asleep at the wheel and collided with a box truck in south county.

David A. Calligan Jr., 19, was driving a 1998 Ford Explorer east on Route 258 near Brookwood Road just before 3 p.m. when he fell asleep and crossed the center line, county police said.

The Ford collided with a westbound GMC box truck, which overturned, trapping Calligan.

A county fire department spokesperson said it took 15 to 20 minutes for firefighters to free Calligan, who was flown by state police helicopter to the Maryland Shock Trauma Center in Baltimore.

The box truck driver, 29-year-old Ulise Trujillo-Hetteta of Waldorf, and passenger Raphael Ignot, 26, of Fort Washington, were not seriously hurt.

(The Maryland Gazette)

A Carlisle couple is homeless following a house fire Sunday.

The borough's four fire companies were dispatched about 3 p.m. to a one-story ranch house owned by Suzanne Zeigler at 307 Avon Drive.

"Fire was coming from the roof when we arrived on the scene," Carlisle Fire Chief David Boyles said this morning.

It took firefighters about 45 minutes to contain and extinguish the blaze.

Boyles said the homeowner was out shopping at the time of the fire and no one was home.

The structure sustained heavy fire damage to the roof and severe water damage everywhere else.

He said the fire appears to be electrical in origin and started in the garage.

The American Red Cross provided assistance to the homeowner, her fiance and their three cats and two dogs, said Gene Lucas, executive director.

Boyles said a passerby from the neighborhood rescued the pets from the home.

One firefighter was treated at the scene for a minor burn.

(The Carlisle [Pa.] Sentinel)

Notice that in both of these inverted-pyramid story examples an editor could easily remove the last couple paragraphs if needed for space and still retain the essential information of the story.