News Article Writing Guidelines

✓ Story slug, your name, date, word count are listed single spaced in top left hand corner of the first page
✓ Headline should be center and in bold. Your byline should be also centered on the single spaced line below the headline
✓ Paragraphs (grafs) should be indented five spaces and double spaced
✓ Keep graf length short, just two or three sentences. Quotes can go in their own grafs
✓ Don’t always put quote attribution before the quote. It is more usually in the middle of the quote when there’s a natural break, or at the end after the quote
✓ Need first and last names of all people mentioned in your stories, as well as their positions, job titles, year (for students) and age, major, hometown (if you want)
✓ When second referencing someone, use the last name, not just the first name (too informal)
✓ Avoid first person involvement and references: no “I”, “we,” or “me”
✓ Your opinions or how you went about gathering the information are not appropriate in regular news articles
✓ Avoid unattributed opinions. Example: “Housing, food and parking: three aspects of the College of Charleston that are flawed.” Keep out your personal opinions. All opinions, questionable assertions, and points that could be disputed need to be attributed to someone by name and position, or like this: “Students say…” or “According to College of Charleston officials…”
✓ Avoid “gush” or over-enthusiastic writing such as: “The CVS drugstore at the corner of George and St. Philip streets is a tremendous convenience for students.” Just say it’s very accessible to students. “Tremendous” is overstating, even hyping or exaggerating. Same thing with “a dazzling new CVS…” So be careful with descriptive adjectives that hype or are too “gushy.”
✓ At end of your articles, don’t feel like you need a closing summary paragraph as you would with other school papers. Summaries often contain personal opinions, which are not appropriate in news stories.
✓ Write in the Associated Press writing style

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