



Lesson Plans

created by Fiona Kirwan



NewsBrands
Ireland

An Initiative from NewsBrands Ireland.



Features Tutorial

Pages:

20 23



40-80 minutes +



Click to download!
Handout for
analysing Feature
Articles.
PDF to print/
photocopy

Material to be used

Read through pages 20-23.

Emphasise how while a feature article is always focused on a specific **topic** it also generally has **theme** or a message.

Get the class to look at the examples on pages 21 and 22. Ask them to identify in general terms what **topic** the articles seems to be examining and maybe to guess what they think the main message might be. The headlines and photos are already indicating these to them.

After these pages have been read **each student should take a newspaper** and do the following:

Optional: Features Tutorial

1. Write down the name of their paper and date published.
2. **Identify a feature article** in their paper.
3. Write down the **headline**/ sub head and byline.
4. Break the article down using the following prompts:
 - What **topic** is the article focusing on?
 - How does it try to catch the **reader's attention** at the start?
 - Is there colourful, descriptive **language** or is it more informative and factual?
 - How does the feature article **end**? (Is there a quote, a punchline, does it draw a conclusion or refer back to the opening?)
 - Was there some kind of **hook or angle** to the feature article that caught your attention?
 - Were many **quotes** used? If so from what sources?

After each student has read and analysed a feature article by themselves they could then compare their analysis in pairs and feed back to the group.



Feature Article Tutorial

1. Write down the name of your paper and the date of publication..

2. Identify a feature article in your paper.

3. Write down the **headline/ sub head and byline (if they are all there)**

Headline: _____

Sub Head: _____

Byline: _____

4. Break the article down using the following prompts:

• What **topic** is the article focusing on?

• How does it try to catch the reader's attention at the start?

• Is there colourful, descriptive language or is it more informative and factual? Give examples to illustrate your opinion.



- How does the feature article end? (Is there a quote, a punchline, does it draw a conclusion or refer back to the opening?)

- Was there some kind of hook or angle to the feature article that caught your attention?

- Were many quotes used? If so from what sources?

In pairs or small groups decide the following:

- Decide which feature article you think had the best opening and explain why.

- Choose which article you preferred on the basis of the topic and the message..

- Compare the way your articles ended. Decide which was your favourite ending and explain why.

- What type of extra information was given or who was quoted?

Features Tutorial

What is a feature?

The main differences between a feature and a news story are style and length.

Whereas news is straight-up factual and strictly structured, features are longer, more analytical and softer focussed.

Features can vary widely, from fashion to diet fads, celebrity profiles to human interest stories. They can accompany a news story, or in most cases they have their own section in newspapers and magazines.

How to write a feature

Writing a feature affords the journalist the luxury to use more colourful, descriptive language. In addition, a feature story doesn't have to follow the conventional structure of a news story, i.e. the most important part of the story at the top of the article.

With a feature, once you catch the reader's attention from the start, you can then build to the climax, or the main point, and work around that with descriptions or important information on the topic.

It is a common style for journalists to start a feature with a very graphic, descriptive introduction to draw in the reader, building the information slowly but surely, and then round it off nicely, letting the reader feel satisfied that they know all they need about the subject by the last line.

Some writers end lighter stories with a funny line at the end,

others with a knock-em-dead punchline - a 'shock' tactic.

Others finish with a technique of referring back to the line at the start and 'tying it up nicely'. As well as offering journalists a greater range of writing styles, feature pages also offer real scope to page designers.

Some of the best looking pages in newspapers and magazines are often the features pages because the design rule book is thrown away.

The pages are meant to be colourful striking and controversial, firstly to hook the reader, and secondly to differentiate the features section from other parts of the paper.

The hook for a feature is often a news story - the story behind the story as it were.



feature

SPACE: my final frontier

With talents in both science and drama, Dr Niadh Shaw has successfully combined her passions and carved a unique career for herself making space exploration interesting for everyone. But the Dundalk woman has her sights set on the ultimate goal - becoming an astronaut. Here, DARRAGH MCMANUS meets a lady on an interplanetary mission

16 IRISH INDEPENDENT WEEKEND MAGAZINE 10 June 2018



Headline

Catchy headlines help grab the attention

10 World News

Escaping Boko Haram: the mother who hid her daughter in a ditch for nine months

Sally Hayden writes: Zainabeu Hamajaji faked mental illness to deter Islamic militants from searching for her eldest girl



Zainabeu Hamajaji faked mental illness to deter Islamic militants from searching for her eldest girl

When she fled Nigeria, she hid her daughter in a ditch for nine months. Zainabeu Hamajaji faked mental illness to deter Islamic militants from searching for her eldest girl. She was eventually rescued by her family.

When she fled Nigeria, she hid her daughter in a ditch for nine months. Zainabeu Hamajaji faked mental illness to deter Islamic militants from searching for her eldest girl. She was eventually rescued by her family.

Boko Haram decided they did not want a child from a madwoman... They were so convinced she was insane that they never searched for her. It will be a curse, so I was protected

For people who aspire to inspire.

ES&O Home Management Practice... For people who aspire to inspire.

North Korea shrugs off sanctions to grow at fastest pace since 1999

Travel ban US prohibits visits to North Korea... North Korea shrugs off sanctions to grow at fastest pace since 1999.

China under pressure to allow Nobel laureate's widow move abroad

China under pressure to allow Nobel laureate's widow move abroad... Nobel laureate's widow move abroad.

Thai court to deliver Shinawatra verdict

Thai court to deliver Shinawatra verdict... Thai court to deliver Shinawatra verdict.

US House Education Committee

US House Education Committee... US House Education Committee.

ES&O Home Management Practice

ES&O Home Management Practice... ES&O Home Management Practice.

A scientist. Dr Niamh Shaw says, "You have expertise." She, as it happens, is both artist and scientist in the current sense. Niamh Shaw wants to go into space, and she does some amazing things over the last few years as part of that, including participating in "Ultimate" Mars mission.

Sometimes, she fervently believes, it will happen: the powers that be in space exploration, Niamh says, "start ignore me forever" and when the family dogs to quote the poet, "sit the early hours of the night," this is why she's undertaking to get there will be as meaningful and epic as the extra-terrestrial voyage itself. Let's go right back to the start. She now lives in Blackrock in a lovely terrace overlooking Dublin Bay, but was born in Dunblain in the late 1970s. The "family dog" is her house growing up wasn't the usual stuff, such as sport or music, but science fiction and information.

"We couldn't get enough information," she says now. "I think it was probably a strategy on Mum and Dad's part. I remember him buying encyclopaedias, and they'd be on the shelf for us to look up." The programmes that she had would be things like David Attenborough, or Carl Sagan, and we'd all watch them together. She had subscribed to the National Geographic, which had all those theories and a lot of them were space-related. So it was everywhere.

Her brother, she recalls, was "a total geek" as well, and the book was placed early it really began to bloom after a "lightbulb moment" of seeing the Earth from space. "I was looking at the Earth from space, which basically kicked-started the astronomical interest in me from that point on," she says. "I really want to see that for myself" and that feeling never left. It never left.

"Every child gets the wonder of the universe. And if you stop and think, every adult gets it too. Life is a miracle, maybe more so for adults, though."

I realised I was a COMBINATION of both art and science... My performing skills are useful in that I have no FEAR of people

She was on a course of academia, and that, Niamh says, "was success to a lot of people. But it me, there was always something missing." On getting her doctorate, she took a university job, doing post-doctoral research, but it "really was meaningless" and there was a lot of politicking and jockeying for funding that she always been a creative child, writing plays, performing for family and friends. As an adult Niamh had been "acting on and off of an Oscar" for years, and in the early 2010s began getting involved in the theatre scene in



PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL O'NEILL

with projects. She was on a course of academia, and that, Niamh says, "was success to a lot of people. But it me, there was always something missing." On getting her doctorate, she took a university job, doing post-doctoral research, but it "really was meaningless" and there was a lot of politicking and jockeying for funding that she always been a creative child, writing plays, performing for family and friends. As an adult Niamh had been "acting on and off of an Oscar" for years, and in the early 2010s began getting involved in the theatre scene in

Cork, involving some of that city's most iconic names: the Everman, the Ginsters, Cuckoo.

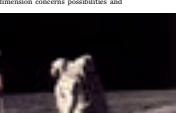
Niamh got "more and more involved", and decided she wanted to pursue this for a few years. The stage acting "wasn't what" and there were very few T.V. roles: you probably remember her as Frances McElginn in *Fair City* around a decade ago, and she also worked in *Mother and Father* with George Gandy, among others. Then she started creating plays with others, who encouraged Niamh to bring her science background and knowledge into the process.

"That was it," she says. "I was off. I realised that was a combination of both art and science. In terms of the scientific part of my brain, I love contributing to radio and making events for the general public. My performing skills are useful in that I have no fear of people. I can improvise - I did comedy for 13 years - and love interacting with the audience. I have the skills to tell a story and get people comfortable."

The way all this overlaps with the creative part of me is hard to define or explain to people. They ask, How can you do both? Why do you want to write plays and make documentaries? But I get just as excited about all of it.

Niamh had studied particle physics and spent some time at CERN, and while working on her first show, there about the size of, drew on her familiarity with higher dimensions. Ultimately, that led to a seminal moment of clarity.

"I was looking at dimensions to help me figure out where I'm supposed to go in my life," she says. "The fifth dimension concerns possibilities and



Client Higgs Astronaut Eoin Buzzi and Niamh Shaw on the set of the 2015 'Above, Beyond' Mars mission

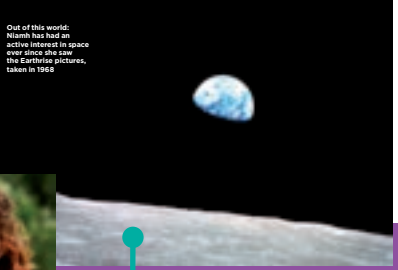
probabilities, and that's every time you make a decision, your fourth-dimensional self bleeds into you. You know the state of choices made. So be the truth of life, you can draw this tree of life, built by your decisions, and from one to the other.

"So be that I should I looked at all those times when I made a decision that put me on a different course and saw fourth-dimensional self in a different direction."

feature

» Say the girl who stayed in research, or worked in London Underground, or decided to become an actor or an astronaut or even a Marxist?

She said a colleague made videos for the show, re-enacted those "sliding doors" moments. When it came to make Astronaut Niamh, she found it "really difficult. I had a harder suit, like an astronaut's flight suit,



PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL O'NEILL

and, if you made it to the actual psychological and physical reach."

The day will come when they realise the importance of putting an ARTIST or communicator up on the International Space Station

they returned to their communities. I thought some of them how to outtake part in a simulated Mars mission in Utah, funded by Elon Musk and "want to bring a human element to their application, so select me to apply."

She is a genuinely inspirational woman, with a fierce courage and single-mindedness. The day job, or jobs, include her work with Blackrock Castle, media contributions, public talks and panel events, among a wide diversity of other projects. She's lectured in Japan and at IREX, been honoured by President Higgins and in the Dublin point of contact for Ireland's national Space Week. Her latest project, the Science Gallery's *Life at the Edge* exhibition in Trinity, runs from June 22 to September 30. (She's also one of the Irish women with their rights trained on the stars. She's a member of the Royal Society of Astronomical Engineering from UCL, is one of 12 participants in Project PROMISE training programme which takes place in Florida next October.)

It is, Niamh accepts, a tough life in some ways - but a blessed one too. "I've made some huge personal sacrifices: I live alone, I've very few outings. Every penny I make goes on the next trip, the next mission. I've stripped my life down to its simplest elements. And I know most people can't do this, they don't have the luxury of being able to change their life mid-stream. So I do honour that - and realize how lucky I am to be able to pursue this."

niamhshaw.ie

Content Engaging and Informative

Design Colourful graphics and panels are very effective

25 IRISH GONE TO FIGHT IN I.S. WAR

PROPERTY GLOOM

EXCLUSIVE: WE REVEAL IF IT'S CHEAPER TO RENT OR BUY

AVG HOUSE PRICE

MORTGAGE PAY

AVG RENT

WAGE TO BUY

WAGE TO RENT

PRICED OUT OF MARKET

ISLES' U.N. SNUB

Gardaí vigilant

We're at point where

Karl O'Meara, Irish Sun Property guru

Hope we're ADVANCED the parade from something to be observed, to something that's COMPLETELY immersive

PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL O'NEILL



HIV Interrupted

By Scarlett Rodrigues
Dominican College, Galway.

The tiny red Fiat turns the city centre corner and slows to a stop in front of me. I open the door and am met with a beaming smile, the driver, John, matches the size of the car. We first met in Paris where, with a shared love of art, we bonded during the mandatory Louvre visit.

Today we are delivering "Brass Munkie's", a quarterly publication he draws all the artwork for by hand. Thinking we might stop so I can interview him, John tells me "driving is my best hobby" so we continue through inner city Dublin while he talks about his life. Four mornings a week he teaches tai chi before teaching an art class then heading to the other side of the city to work on Brass Munkie. A busy man, but so calm you would never know. From his quiet, seemingly shy voice, you would never imagine his great acting achievements. Chatting happily about growing up in inner city Dublin and the family coal business. His demeanor changes and the 56 year old grins when he talks about his wife – good memories must come to mind. He tells me they are lifelong friends who grew up on the same street and have been together nearly 40 years. Her parents didn't approve of their relationship, but in his own words "love is blind and it was meant to be." The couple now have two children and four grandchildren. In the nineties, John went

Learn from last year's winner



through a rough patch – as many young men do. For him, this meant drugs and resulted in addiction. He was among the first group of people to be diagnosed with HIV in Ireland. In his quiet voice, with eyes fixed on the road ahead, John tells me of the day in 1992 he and his wife sat in a councillor's office and were told about his positive status. He ran outside and even in the open space felt the world closing in on him. Not only was he shocked, but frightened. People weren't educated about HIV in 1992 and John thought he probably only had one year to live. The news sent him into a spiral and his addiction became the focus. He felt he needed an escape from reality and drugs provided this. In 2003, over a decade after being diagnosed, John started treatment. It was called a "cocktail" and he took around 20 tablets a day with massive side

effects. Today, after living with HIV for more than twenty-five years, John takes two tablets a day and the virus is no longer detectable in his system. This just shows how far we have come in HIV/AIDS treatment, and how much it has improved the lives of the millions of people who live with it. Asking how HIV impacts his life now, John explains that the virus itself has no impact, however, the stigma around it is still strong. He would like to see improved education, starting with schools. He hopes his grandchildren will be taught using evidence and not scare tactics when the topic is discussed in their classrooms. We pull over to deliver a handful of the magazines to a respite centre for people with HIV and John tells me many young people are still in the dark about how it is contracted and scared of touching a person with

HIV. The sadness in his eyes highlights why we need proper education in schools, so the next generation can make sure there is no stigma and people will know the facts.

As we take the final turn before getting out of the car I thank him for his openness and honesty. When we learn about HIV at school, teachers don't tell us that this can happen to anybody, or that people can live long healthy lives and have HIV undetected in their system for many years.

John is not only my friend but an extraordinary person and spokesperson for people with HIV. He has taught me that HIV is far from being a life sentence and that he can still do all the things he loves.

It's not possible to know if someone has HIV by looking at them. In Ireland approximately 7000 people live with HIV and the European Centre for Disease Control estimates a further three in ten people living with HIV don't know their status. With these figures and an average of ten people being diagnosed each week, there is a chance some of my friends have a positive status. To them I say, I choose you as my friend and will support you to live the life you choose.

LIVING LIFE

A rural revival with the Biddy

Traditional St Brigid's Day in the Irish pantheon was celebrated with the Biddy When Kilbeg National School was in need funds to repair the custom and put it in good order, writes Anne O'Donoghue

U ntil one sees them, Kerry is thought of as a rural county. The Biddy When Kilbeg National School was in need funds to repair the custom and put it in good order, writes Anne O'Donoghue

COUNTRY TRAILS

St Brigid's Day

Traditional St Brigid's Day in the Irish pantheon was celebrated with the Biddy When Kilbeg National School was in need funds to repair the custom and put it in good order, writes Anne O'Donoghue

TV STAR'S HEALTH BATTLE

I was a zombie..It felt like I'd had a personality transplant

GOGGLEBOX'S SHEILA OPENS UP ON EATING DISORDER HELL

Lightbulb moment: I'm a grown-up

The lightbulb moment: I'm a grown-up

Assaulted, kicked out of home & shot at by police.. for being gay

Blogger's life of terror in Venezuela

A feature should be entertaining, colourful but important

“Of the hundreds of essays we trawled through across the four categories the Features winner was easily one of the stand out entries.”

Press Pass Judging Panel

Before you begin

Many news reporters struggle with the freedom of the feature article, and vice versa with feature writers who are asked to report on a news story.

They are two very different disciplines, and few manage to straddle both sides of the journalism divide with equal success.

Think of the feature article like a short story mixed with a parable - it should be entertaining, colourful but with important information to convey.



Check list

- ✓ How much space do I have?
- ✓ Always read over your article at least twice, do a spell check, and make sure all unusual words, names, website addresses, phone numbers and place names are correct.
- ✓ What exactly do I want to include/exclude?
- ✓ What is my deadline?
- ✓ Make notes on the structure of the article - the main points of the story you wish to get across, and in what order. And cross them off as you write them.
- ✓ Don't vary from the word count suggested, at least not by more, or less, than 50 words.

Tips to writing features:

- Look at your chosen theme carefully. Consider the questions suggested and attempt to answer some of them.
- Always try to find an original angle, or hook, for your feature. Because features allow you more freedom, you have an opportunity to be more adventurous.
- Start with the important - get all the essential details in the opening paragraphs.
- Use plenty of quotes. If they are not quotes you gathered yourself, make sure you detail the source of where they are from.
- As with news, include all the essential details - the who, what, where, when and why.

Rent crisis: Will we ever find a home?

by Catherine Murphy

Someone will take it because they're no choice'

An apartment so bad she thought it was a prank, cancelled viewings and being pitted against other desperate renters

Ciara and her boyfriend both have full-time jobs but she reveals the tortuous process they face in a rental market gone mad

'It just seems to be one knock after another'

'We didn't get far, most applications are ignored'

Just €49 a month for 12 months

Bring your home to life

By now, the writing is on the wall — or at least it's on the World Cup wallchart

WATCH THIS IN SPORT SECTION

Diego Lopez's World Cup story

Fast forward is finally dropped

More the merrier with 48 teams

'You might also call it a point of his swinging mauler 'rocklemause''

Life's looking good after road rescue

MY PET

Country Matters

Deadly br

Libre: Challenging up growth back and

Philly: Old world and new look

PostPlus

• MONEY • MARKETS • MOTORS

Health special

They're the drugs that combat the rarest of diseases. But they're so specialised that their price tags are increasingly putting them out of reach. How much longer will Irish patients continue to miss out on such medicines?

Billion dollar ORPHANS

Strensin

By Susan Mitchell

There is a widespread perception that new drugs will only be made available to those patients who, above the rest, the process lacks transparency. The industry's motives are predictable: the medicines watchdogs. What does the future hold for those with a rare disease?