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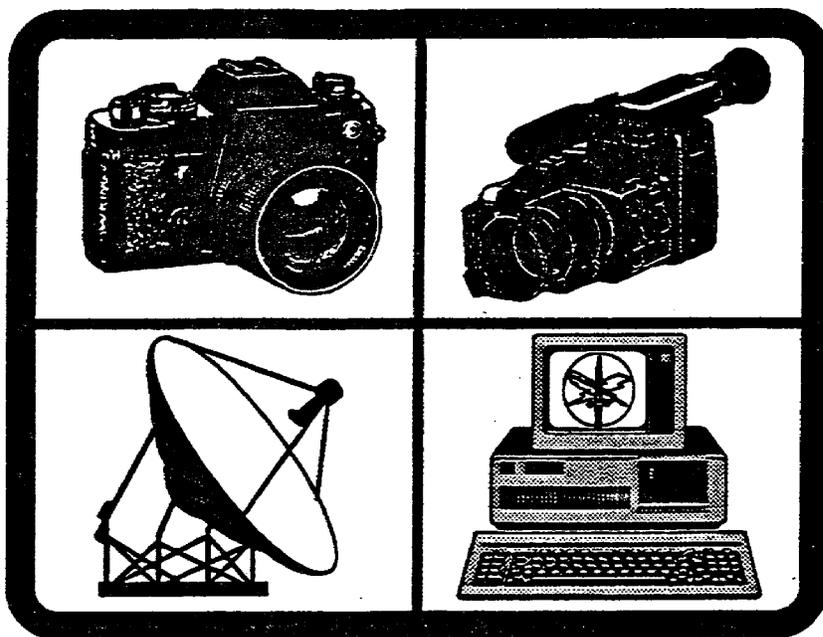
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SUBCOURSE
DI0240

EDITION
A

FEATURE WRITING AND EDITORIALS

PUBLIC AFFAIRS



THE ARMY INSTITUTE FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
ARMY CORRESPONDENCE COURSE PROGRAM

**A
I
P
D**

READINESS/
PROFESSIONALISM



THRU
GROWTH

FEATURE WRITING AND EDITORIALS

Subcourse Number DI 0240

EDITION A

Army Public Affairs Center
Fort George G. Meade, Maryland

10 Credit Hours

Edition Date: March 1993

SUSBCOURSE OVERVIEW

We designed this subcourse to teach you basic procedures and tasks related to writing feature stories and editorials. Specific information is provided on the concept, function, structure and types/variations of feature stories; writing personality profiles; writing sidebars for feature stories; and the concept, purpose, structure and types/variations of editorials.

This subcourse reflects the doctrine current at the time the subcourse was prepared. In your own work situation, always refer to the latest official publications.

Unless otherwise stated, the masculine gender of singular pronouns is used to refer to both men and women.

TERMINAL LEARNING OBJECTIVE

ACTION: You will identify the function, structure and types/variations of feature stories; and identify the concept, purpose, structure and types/variations of editorials.

CONDITION: You are given the material presented in this lesson.

STANDARD: To demonstrate competency of this task, you must achieve a minimum of 70 percent on the subcourse examination.

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LESSON ONE

FEATURE WRITING

46Q Soldier's Manual Task: 214-176-1305

OVERVIEW

LESSON DESCRIPTION:

In this lesson you will learn the definition of a feature story, the basic approaches to writing the feature story and the different types of features.

TERMINAL LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

ACTION: Define the feature story, identify the five steps to organizing and writing a feature and recognize the different types of features.

CONDITION: You are given the material presented in this lesson.

STANDARD: Perform all the duties described in this lesson.

REFERENCE: The material contained in this lesson was derived from:

STP 46-46Q14-SM-TG, Journalist
DINFOS Journalism Handbook
Feature Writing for Newspapers by Daniel R.
Williamson, Hastings House

FEATURE WRITING

INTRODUCTION

Feature stories are different from straight news stories, which provide answers to the five W's and H --the who, what, where, when, why and how -- with added details for support. Features, in addition to the five W's and H call for imagination, colorful writing and --usually --more research.

By definition, a feature story is a creative, sometimes subjective article, primarily designed to entertain, educate or inform readers about an event, person, situation or an aspect of life.

Unlike straight news stories, features are normally not timely. This is an advantage for editors because features can be held until there is space in the paper. A story about a sergeant whose hobby is making model artillery weapons will be of interest to readers anytime.

There are, however, some features which must appear shortly before or after events. These are called "news features" and do have time value. For example, a feature interview with a survivor of a helicopter crash may not be very interesting six months after the crash.

BASIC APPROACHES

Writing the feature story requires discipline and organization. Concentrate on getting the required information and putting it into an easily understood form.

Start by **defining your topic**. Decide what information you want. Figure out how to get it and who to get it from. Plan how you will write your idea.

Next, **research the story**. Check the newspaper's file of old story clippings and back issues (the morgue) to find previously published material on the topic. Check references such as encyclopedias, maps, etc. If you use reference books, give full attribution.

Then **prepare questions**. Prepare more questions than you think you need to cover the topic when talking to sources.

Set up the interview. During the interview, observe your subject and his surroundings. Note gestures and body language. What does the room look like? Be a "human camera" --describe your subject and pertinent features of the environment. Such details help make the story interesting and believable for the reader.

Depending on circumstances this step may occur once you've defined your topic.

After the interview, **go back over your notes** immediately and add details you may not have noted at the time but that may add to your story. Fill in gaps in your notes while the interview is still fresh in your mind. Make your notes readable before you write. It is best to summarize all details pertinent to the story.

TYPES OF FEATURES

There are several forms features can take. Attempts have been made to classify them, but usually any one feature will exhibit several characteristics which writers should understand, such as the:

- o NEWS FEATURE --Ties closely to the a human-interest aspect of a news event.

Example: A soldier loses 78 pounds in one year, and scores 300 on the Army Physical Fitness Test.

- o PERSONAL EXPERIENCE FEATURE --Tells an unusual experience, either the writer's or someone else's.

Example: A soldier finds missing brother after 12-year search.

- o CONFESSION FEATURE --Written in a confidential tone either humorous or serious, with a positive ending.

Example: A former drug addict tells how he "kicked the habit."

- o NARRATIVE FEATURE --Similar to a short story in form, with action.

Example: Soldiers spend a weekend white-water rafting.

- o ESSAY FEATURE --Written often from library research, explains scientific facts or historical events. The writer must explain facts and figures in an interesting way rather than in the "dry" textbook style.

Example: A story about a World War II battle in which your unit participated and was cited for its action.

- o INTERVIEW FEATURE --Though it has other variations, the interview feature primarily uses a question-and-answer format. Many magazines carry an interview as a standard feature each issue.

Example: The post sergeant major's views on the new physical fitness program.

- o HOW-TO FEATURE --Gives specific directions or information.

Example: How to balance your checkbook.

- o PERSONALITY FEATURE --Describes a person's achievements and focuses on details of character and personality.

Example: A soldier who joined the Army as a high school dropout receives his master's degree.

- o HUMAN INTEREST FEATURE --The classic human interest stories are commonly referred to as "The Three B' s" --Babies, Beasts and Beauties. Stories about children, animals, beautiful women or handsome men always intrigue people. So do stories involving anything odd or out of the ordinary, and stories about adventure.

Features normally fall into one of three categories. The three most common are news features, human interest features and personality features. They may cover such areas as:

- o adventures
- o everyday life and experiences
- o humorous incidents
- o tragic occurrences
- o oddities
- o animals and their antics
- o seasonal items
- o chronological sequences

You can find examples of feature stories in Reader's Digest, People Magazine, or in the Life Style section of the Sunday newspaper.

PRACTICE EXERCISE

LESSON .

SUBCOURSE NO. DI C240

FEATURE WRITING

INSTRUCTIONS:

Review the material in this lesson. Answer the questions below by circling the "T" or "F" next to each question. Compare your answers with the answer key on the next page.

- T F 1. In addition to supplying answers to the five W's and H, feature writing normally calls for more research.
- T F 2. Defining your topic includes preparing questions needed to cover that topic.
- T F 3. Like the straight news story, features are normally timely.
- T F 4. The human interest feature centers on one person.

ANSWER KEY

PRACTICE EXERCISE

LESSON 1

SUBCOURSE NO. DI 0240

FEATURE WRITING

1. True (Page 2)
2. False (Page 2)
3. False (Page 2)
4. False (Page 4)

LESSON TWO

ORGANIZING THE FEATURE STORY

46Q Soldier's Manual Task: 214-176-1305

OVERVIEW

LESSON DESCRIPTION:

In this lesson you will learn about the sources for feature story ideas, how to select a point of view for the feature story and how to recognize the three forms the feature story can take.

TERMINAL LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

ACTION: Identify basic sources for feature story ideas, understand how to focus and outline before writing the story, recognize the parts of a feature's structure, and know the three types of structures features can take.

CONDITION: You are given the material presented in this lesson.

STANDARD: Perform all the duties described in this lesson.

REFERENCE: The material contained in this lesson was derived from:

STP 46-46Q14-SM-TG, Journalist
DINFOS Journalism Handbook
Feature Writing for Newspapers by Daniel R.
Williamson, Hastings House

ORGANIZING THE FEATURE STORY

SOURCES OF FEATURE STORY IDEAS

Look around you. What ideas for possible feature stories do you see?

What about that private on the company drill team who speaks with an accent? She was born and raised in Germany; what is she doing in the U.S. Army?

What about that fellow next to you? Why does he keep talking about V-8s, differentials and shocks? Was he really with Al Unser as a mechanic for three years?

What about that retiree you met at the post exchange? He's the one who limps and keeps riling you by calling you "Sonny." Why does he keep talking about Korea, and how today's youngsters have it so good?

The successful feature writer must be inquisitive and develop a keen sense of observation. A well-tended landscape isn't just a pleasant sight to him. He wonders who keeps it trim and why. He inquires into the benefits of conservation or soil erosion control and the alternatives, wildlife sanctuaries or outdoor living. And, chances are, he can forge the answers to his questions into an interesting feature story.

The power of observation -- the ability to accept nothing at face value, but to dig into unanswered questions below the surface of the event -- is an invaluable asset to the feature writer. Just as an artist develops an eye for subtle coloring and learns to portray it in a painting, so must the feature writer learn to see life and his surroundings with an inquiring mind that demands to know all the answers. He must keep his eyes open for stories all the time, on duty and off.

Another excellent source of ideas is the newspaper. News stories report national, state and local events as they happen. They usually do not give extensive background information or cover all aspects of a story. But every day brings news stories that can have feature angles.

Sometimes the idea is obvious. Sometimes it is hidden. The ability to take bare facts from the news page and to give them meaning can produce a good feature article. But the feature must reflect local interest. For example, when a news story announces a change in the town's property tax base, the feature writer can show how this change will affect the local home owner. Thus, the writer localizes the news story for the reader and gives it expanded meaning.

Military news gives the alert and skillful writer more than a handful of items that could be broken down and brought a little closer to home, with issues such as:

- o changes in regulations
- o pay increases
- o policy
- o mission
- o organization

It takes an alert writer to turn bare facts and sometimes dull items into interesting, meaningful articles.

SELECTING A POINT OF VIEW

Before you start writing, decide what point of view is best for your feature. You may write from someone else's, or your own viewpoint. The point of view should be identifiable and consistent in the story.

- o ANOTHER PERSON' S POINT OF VIEW --In human interest features, write from the viewpoint of a person involved in the story.

Example: The Army private closed his eyes, reflecting briefly about his deed. "I heard a woman screaming, 'Help me!' As I turned the corner I saw smoke and flames coming from about 50 feet away. Guided by an infant's cries, I raced inside and crawled through the smokey inferno," he said.

- o "I" POINT OF VIEW --Use this approach when you wish to report what you saw and how you felt about it. But use it infrequently.

Example: I watched the crowd leaving the field and wondered if it....

FOCUS AND OUTLINE

Focusing means to test your collected facts against the original idea you identified in the first step of this process, and to redefine the idea if the facts no longer support your original thesis. Ask yourself: What is this story about? Why am I writing it? What is the main point to tell the readers? Write down your main point in the form of a sentence.

For instance: **This story is about an Army sergeant trying to make the Olympic swimming team.** You might decide to limit the ground you will cover in the story. You might tell about the grueling training the swimmer has done during off-duty time to get ready for tryouts. It would be natural to talk about:

- o hopes and dreams
- o family support
- o how swimming fits in with the soldier's duties
- o how swimming doesn't fit in with the soldier's duties

It would take a crafty writer, a sleepy editor and a very tolerant reader to permit much space to be devoted to unrelated facts such as the swimmer's grades in elementary school and playground friends. You must leave out facts that don't pertain to the focus you've established. Just because the source gave you an interesting quote doesn't mean it must be used. Use only facts that fit. Often a person has other interesting hobbies or aspects of his life. Mention them, but don't get sidetracked.

Outlining helps you identify the facts that fit. It can be a formal process with headings and subheadings. Or it can be as informal as tearing pages out of your notebook and reordering them. The point is, some form of outline will help you order the facts so you know how to begin, what to put into the middle and how to end your story. Very often the difference between writing a difficult story and a simple one is an outline.

STRUCTURE

The feature story usually includes these parts: the lead, bridge, body and ending.

The **LEAD** grabs the reader's attention and "sells" the story. Depending on the type of lead used, it could contain all five W's and the H, or it might answer just one of them. However, the remaining Ws or H must be logically answered elsewhere in the story.

- o Who -This can be personal, by mentioning the subject's name, or impersonal, by emphasizing a person's title or group's name.
- o What -This satisfies the reader's curiosity about what happened. "What" and "who" leads are used most often.
- o When -The time element of an event.
- o Where -Sometimes where an event or incident occurred or is to occur is the most important aspect of a story.

- o Why -The "why" element can be the most important fact when the answer directly affects the reader or otherwise is of importance to the audience.
- o How -Emphasizing the answer to the "how" question could add to the reader's interest in the story.

Sometimes called the "thesis paragraph," the **BRIDGE** is a transition between the lead and body and helps back up or add information to the lead.

The **BODY** develops the story with details.

The **ENDING** may leave the reader with a strong conclusion or summary, or it could leave the reader hanging when the outcome of a situation is still unclear.

Although various diagrams have been drawn up to show the structure or organization of the feature story, there is no one correct structure for a feature. Features may take one of two forms:

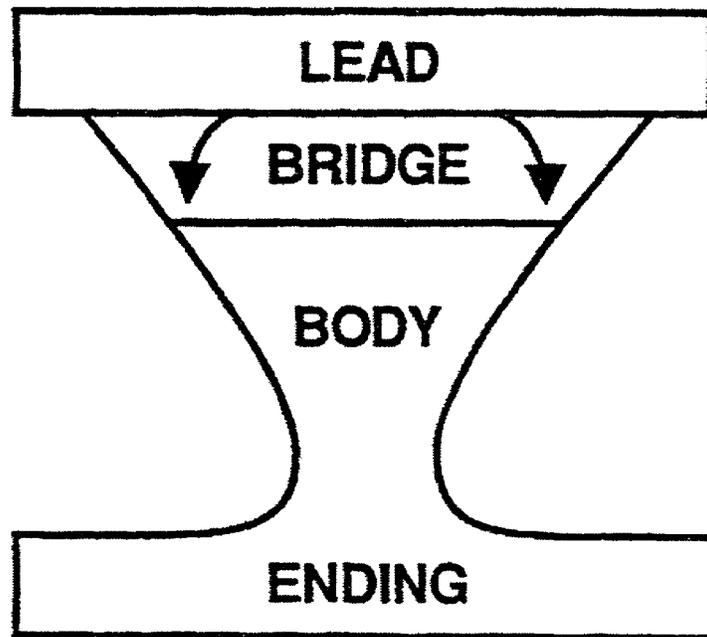


Figure 2-1
Feature Pyramid

The feature pyramid uses a strong lead and an ending that is equal, or nearly equal, in importance to the lead. It is perhaps the most common form used. Facts are given in order of increasing importance, and this is the most common structure in feature writing.

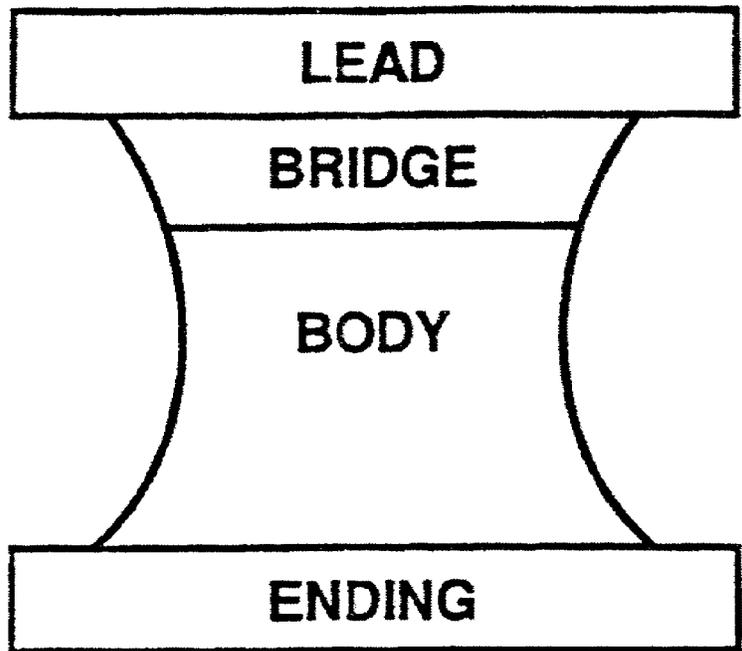


Figure 2-2
Chronological Pyramid

The chronological pyramid has a strong lead, a brief bridge, and the body is written in the order in which events happened. The body usually leads up to a strong, climactic conclusion.

Typical features which are written in this format include narrative, personal experience, confession and how-to articles.

Remember that the story content is often the best guide to help determine which format will best present your feature.

PRACTICE EXERCISE

LESSON 2

SUBCOURSE NO. DI 0240

ORGANIZING THE FEATURE STORY

INSTRUCTIONS:

Review the material in this lesson. Answer the questions below by circling the "T" or "F" next to each question. Compare your answers with the answer key on the next page.

- T F 1. Possessing sharp writing skills proves to be the feature writer's most valuable asset.
- T F 2. Focusing means to determine the main point you want to convey to your readers.
- T F 3. The lead of a feature story must contain all five W's and the H.
- T F 4. The body of the feature story serves as a transition from the lead and the bridge.

ANSWER KEY

PRACTICE EXERCISE

LESSON 2

SUBCOURSE NO. DI 0240

ORGANIZING THE FEATURE STORY

1. False (Page 8)
2. True (Page 9)
3. False (Page 10)
4. False (Page 11)

LESSON THREE

WRITING THE FEATURE STORY

46Q Soldier's Manual Task: 214-176-1305

OVERVIEW

LESSON DESCRIPTION:

In this lesson you will learn about the nine types of feature leads, the purpose of the bridge, how to build the feature's body and about the four types of endings commonly used in feature stories.

TERMINAL LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

ACTION: Recognize the nine types of feature leads, know the function of the feature's bridge, apply the given techniques in order to develop the story's body, and identify the four types of endings used in feature writing.

CONDITION: You are given the material presented in this lesson.

STANDARD: Perform all the duties described in this lesson.

REFERENCE: The material contained in this lesson was derived from:

STP 46-46Q14-SM-TG, Journalist
DINFOS Journalism Handbook
Feature Writing for Newspapers by Daniel R.
Williamson, Hastings House

WRITING THE FEATURE STORY

FEATURE LEADS

The purpose of a feature lead is to get and keep the reader's interest and to set the tone of the story. The feature lead may be as short as one or two sentences or it may take two, three or more paragraphs to fully develop.

Feature leads are classified into the following nine categories:

- o SUMMARY LEAD -- Gives the main point of the story, arouses interest and allows swift scanning of important facts.

Example: It's not easy for retired Sgt. 1st Class Martin T. Johnson to keep up on a 10K fun-run. He lost his left leg five years ago.

- o DESCRIPTIVE LEAD) -- Causes the reader to draw a mental picture of the subject or site and places the reader a few feet away, in position to see, hear and smell what is being written about.

Example: The last chopper sat down at Fire Support Base Ross in a whirl of reddish-brown dust amidst a hundred or so excited, jabbering Vietnamese men. It had been a long flight from Danang and the 30 passengers aboard suffered from ringing ears and buzzing limbs. As soon as the ramp was lowered, there was the usual rush on wobbly legs to solid ground. The search for a familiar face or landmark began by sweat-drenched, green-clad men loaded down with packs, cartons of cigarettes and mail bags.

- o QUOTATION LEAD -- Gives a short, attention-getting remark that is so important that it overshadows other facts of the story. It must also be striking to the reader and serve to lead him into the story.

Example: "I look death in the face every morning," Master Sgt. James K. Tennus exclaimed. "And I love it!"

CAUTION: Quote leads should be used sparingly and they must be well written. Boring "ho-hum" quotes will turn off reader interest. The quote should "hook" the reader into wanting to read the rest of the feature.

- o QUESTION LEAD -- Works best when it asks a question that applies to many readers. If used it should be answered quickly, so as not to leave the reader dangling. This is an effective, yet abused, type

of feature lead. Questions to which the reader can quickly answer "yes" or "no" must be avoided.

Example: Why should an infantryman spend countless hours studying toward a college degree?

CAUTION: A weak question lead could get readers to answer, "Who cares?" A strong question lead, however, will reap benefits since people are usually curious.

- o DIRECT ADDRESS LEAD --The writer communicates directly with the reader. The word "you" is inserted somewhere in the lead. (This second person singular address should be used sparingly.)

Example: If you play your cards right, you could get a free education at the college of your choice.

- o TEASER LEAD --Deceives the reader in a jesting manner and, by grabbing the reader's attention, gently leads him into the story.

Example: It has legs, a thousand toes, a hundred noses and scores of horns. No, it's not a science fiction monster. It's the newly formed 29th Infantry Division marching band.

- o FREAK LEAD --Uses a play on words, alliteration, poetry, or an unusual typographic device to produce the desired effect of luring the reader into the story.

Example: For sale: One town.

- o NARRATIVE LEAD --Puts the reader into the story and takes him through it. Narrative leads are especially effective in telling adventure stories. The writer "creates" a situation and skillfully lets the reader become the principal character, either by leaving a vacuum which the reader mentally fills or by allowing the reader to identify with a person in the midst of the action.

Example: The red taillights of the fleeing Cadillac grew smaller as Sgt. Dan Caper floored the accelerator of the military police sedan, pushing the speedometer needle past 90, in an effort to catch the speeder.

- o COMBINATION LEAD --Combines the best elements of two or more of the previously described feature leads.

Example: How can you stack the deck in your favor for the next promotion board? (Combines direct address and question lead forms.)

Whatever form of feature lead you decide to use for a particular story, you must try to sink the hook into the reader with the first few words. Many communication experts say if you don't get the reader's interest in the first few words, you won't.

THE BRIDGE

The bridge of a feature story could be a paragraph or a short sentence. The bridge backs up the lead or adds information to the lead. It should provide a smooth transition into the body for the reader.

Examples:

- (Lead) It's not easy for retired Sgt. 1st Class Martin T. Johnson to keep up on a 10-mile march. He broke both his legs in six places a year ago in an auto accident.
- (Bridge) The Army sergeant has overcome massive obstacles created by his "handicap." (Story goes on describing how he overcame the obstacles and his feelings about the "handicap.")
- (Lead) "I look death in the face every morning," Master Sgt. James K. Tennus exclaimed. "And I love it!"
- (Bridge) His job is not one many soldiers would consider making a career. Tennus is a demolition expert who got his start in the business during the Vietnam War. (Story goes on to describe the kinds of "death-defying" situations in which he has found himself in his job.)

THE BODY

The body of a feature story is often written in the "feature pyramid" form. Instead of giving details in their decreasing order of importance, you may want to save the most important detail for last to surprise the reader at the end of the article. If that is the case, you would use the "chronological pyramid" format. The vivid details of the feature body can be enhanced by using description, by describing the setting, through statistical information and by the use quotes.

Description

A well-written feature demands that the reader use precise detail and description. It paints a lively word picture of the subject to allow

the reader to form a mental picture of the person he's reading about.

The feature story gives insights that set the subject apart. These insights give the reader the feeling that he has actually met the subject.

Daniel R. Williamson, in his book, **Feature Writing for Newspapers**, calls the personality feature "the journalistic art of capturing a human being on paper." He adds that the writer must try to "capture the character within a reasonable amount of space. He must immediately plunge into the character, grabbing the reader's interest by emphasizing a fascinating facet of the subject."

Many military journalists mistake the use of adjectives and adverbs for colorful writing. Without attention to detail and description, all these words do is make for a lot of editorializing on the part of the writer. This is not to say that all adverbs and adjectives should be avoided. To the contrary, they should be used to give the all-important detail and description that makes a feature come alive. But it is the precision with which they are used, not their use, that marks the difference between a novice and a professional.

The novice might write:

The big man walked across the room to his large, dark desk, slowly sat down, leaned forward and in a friendly manner invited the visitor to make himself comfortable.

Reading this, you would have no idea if the subject is tall, short, slim, stocky, dark or light complexioned. Adjectives like "big" are unclear. You know nothing of the setting of the article. Instead, the writer has tossed adjectives and adverbs into the copy at random and has only told the reader about the scene. These detract from, rather than add to, the writing.

The professional, on the other hand, in describing the same scene might write:

He plodded across the carpet, his muscular 6-foot frame gliding as his ancestors might have slipped through the North American forests. Head forward, chin leading the way, he stalked the mahogany desk that filled the corner of the room near the window.

He pulled the padded chair from behind the desk and eased into the seat. A slit of a smile exposed two even rows of teeth made whiter by their contrast to his bronze skin. The light from the window flashed blue on his black hair.

The chiseled features softened.

"Make yourself at home," he said.

Note the details in the second example. What we have now are the writer's observations. He has shown you the scene.

Describe the Setting

Describing the setting helps a feature come alive. If the interview takes place in the subject's office, is it neat? Cluttered? If it's neat as a monk's cell, the writer should say so. If it looks like a monkey's cell, that should be said too, but in a way which is not insulting to your subject.

If the interview takes place in the subject's home, what is it about the place that reflects the subject's personality and character? For example, if a John Wayne-ish man has his den decorated with ruffles and lace and painted in pastel colors, this certainly tells something of his personality.

Statistics

Statistical material, when used properly, can create reader interest. The secret is to translate the figures into terms the reader can comprehend. Often this is done by reducing large figures to smaller ones:

About 150 Americans die in motor vehicle accidents every day.

Burglaries occurred in the United States at the rate of nearly five a minute, around the clock. That's one burglary every 12 1/2 seconds.

Figures can also be inflated to represent a largest idea:

This year traffic deaths on the nation's highways would fill Yankee Stadium.

Another useful technique which many writers miss is the effective use of mathematical, scientific and technical information. A little imagination can help make the terms understandable to readers.

Often, similes, metaphors or similar word pictures can be used to make such information come alive. The alert writer might say that "An ounce of gold can be stretched, without breaking, into a 35-mile wire."

Quotes

A sprinkling of direct quotations by the subject will add zest to the feature. The secret here is to select the quotations that will illustrate an aspect of the personality that is being emphasized. If you want to show that the subject possesses a quick wit, use a quotation illustrating that point.

Quotations by the subject can say more than any number of words a writer could put on paper. The manner in which a person speaks, his accompanying gestures, and the actual words used can all create an image for the reader. (Omit profanity or obscenities.)

One caution on quotes: Make them count. Don't carry the story with one boring quote after another. Don't put statements of the obvious inside quotes. Summarize lengthy quotes with concise paraphrasing and use only the liveliest, most telling quotes to let the subject display his character or philosophy in his own words.

For instance, look at this quote:

"I've enjoyed all my assignments. You meet some great people in the Army."

This quote is nothing more than padding, pure and simple. The writer just filled some space by using this quote, a flatly obvious statement that half a million soldiers might make. It reveals little about the personality of the subject. The only thing we learn from that quote is that the writer lacked imagination.

"I used to play drums in a 60s rock band and our concerts made all the practice worthwhile, with the kids screaming and all. Once a bunch of girls came after us, though."

"At first I thought they just wanted autographs, but they cut off our hair and tore our clothes for souvenirs. But that was the only, what you would call, really 'bad' experience and it wasn't really so bad. Overall, I ate it up, even getting tore up. I was a big star in a little galaxy."

This quote is much too lengthy. Probably a faithful transcript of an interview, but some good material gets buried in a lot of slop: . Combining some tight paraphrasing with the brightest quotes fixes it. One way to do it:

Kids screamed at him. Women attacked him, tearing at his clothes and hair.

"I ate it up," he said of his time spent 5-pounding drums in a 60s rock band. "I was a big star in a little galaxy."

Also, make sure to attribute all information. Answer the S W's and H in feature writing as in straight news writing. feature writing style and format is more flexible, the reader still wants to know as much as possible about the feature subject. Be objective; save opinions for editorials. If you draw conclusions, be sure you've given evidence to support them. Avoid libel.

You are free to use more description and descriptive words, and to use more quotes, but you also will need more transitions between paragraphs to help make the story flow better, and to enhance readability. Transitions are words or phrases that link sentences or paragraphs together. Some common examples are:

again	as a result	finally
indeed	on the other hand	meanwhile
still	since	not only (that)
of course	on the contrary	why?
nevertheless	a case in point	on the whole
earlier	while	because

THE ENDING

The conclusion of all good feature stories should be appropriate to the mood of the story and to the type of structure in which the story was written. As in the lead, the writer is limited only by his ability in composing a conclusion.

There are several types of endings which are commonly used in feature writing:

- o SUMMARY ENDING -- Summarizes the story for the readers.
- o STINGER ENDING -- Presents a startling fact or surprise that jolts the reader.
- o CLIMAX ENDING -- An obvious or logical ending to a story told in chronological order.
- o UNENDING ENDING -- Leaves the reader hanging, or tells him the outcome is still uncertain.
- o WRAP-UP -- Ties up any loose ends, answers a question or solves a problem posed in the lead. An anecdote or strong quote often works in this type of conclusion.
- o TIE-BACK -- Refers back to an idea, key word or quote planted earlier in the story, often in the lead.

- o COMBINATION -- Any ending that combines two or more of the above types.

FINAL TIPS

Refer to the following to help develop your feature writing skills:

- o Use the lead to set the tone or mood of the story.
- o Make sure your lead is appropriate to the type of story.
- o Develop the bridge so that it links the lead to the body.
- o Carry the tone or mood of the lead throughout the story.
- o Maintain your story's focus.
- o Avoid using clichés, but do employ such literary devices as metaphors, similes, personification and hyperbole-
- o Use vivid verbs and nouns.
- o Give appropriate description of the people, places and things in the story.
- o Delete unnecessary, nonfunctional adjectives and adverbs.
- o Stay away from such relative terms as "tall," "old" and beautiful.
- o Use meaningful quotes to humanize the story and assist in its flow.
- o Add attribution when needed.
- o Use transitions to carry the reader from one thought to another.
- o Alternate sentence and paragraph length.
- o Translate numbers and statistical data into understandable terms.
- o Make sure that the conclusion to your feature story matches appropriately.
- o Ensure that your feature is free of any factual errors.
- o Ensure that your feature is free of libelous statements and does not violate security, accuracy, policy or propriety.

PRACTICE EXERCISE

LESSON 3

SUBCOURSE NO. DI 0240

WRITING THE FEATURE STORY

INSTRUCTIONS:

Review the material in this lesson. Answer the questions below by circling the "T" or "F" next to each question. Compare your answers with the answer key on the next page.

- T F 1. The purpose of a feature lead is to get and keep the reader's attention.
- T F 2. The question lead causes the reader to draw a mental picture of the subject and/or site of the story.
- T F 3. The narrative lead puts the reader into the story and leads him through it.
- T F 4. The body of a human interest article is often written in the "inverted pyramid" format.
- T F 5. When using quotes in a feature story, there is no need for paraphrasing.

ANSWER KEY

PRACTICE EXERCISE

LESSON 3

SUBCOURSE NO. DI0240

WRITING THE FEATURE STORY

1. True (Page 16)
2. False (Page 16)
3. True (Page 17)
4. False (Page 18)
5. False (Page 21)

LESSON FOUR

WRITING SIDEBARS

46Q Soldier's Manual Task: 214-176-1306

OVERVIEW

LESSON DESCRIPTION:

In this lesson you will learn about sidebars; what they are and how they are used with features.

TERMINAL LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

ACTION: Define a sidebar, recognize a sidebar's purpose, identify how to find a sidebar and understand the fundamentals of writing sidebars.

CONDITION: You are given the material presented in this lesson.

STANDARD: Perform all the duties described in this lesson.

REFERENCE: The material contained in this lesson was derived from:

STP 46-46Q14-SM-TG, Journalist
DINFOS Journalism Handbook
Feature Writing for Newspapers by Daniel R.
Williamson, Hastings House

WRITING SIDEBARS

PURPOSE

If you can visualize a motorcycle and sidecar, you can visualize the sidebar.

Think of the motorcycle as the news story and the sidecar as the sidebar. The sidecar accompanies the motorcycle; the sidebar accompanies the news or feature story.

Daniel R. Williamson, author of **Feature Writing for Newspapers**, defines the sidebar as "normally a brief account that relates directly to a major news story or in-depth story on the same page or at least in the same edition."

In effect, the sidebar rides the coattails of the story. It helps the reader relate to the news by explaining the importance or significance of related facts.

The sidebar may also expand on those facts presented in the hard news story. By using the sidebar for expansion or further clarification, the news story will not be cluttered with excessive detail.

Helping the reader relate to the cold, hard facts is another purpose of the sidebar. If the news story tells the reader 14 people were killed in a post construction accident, the sidebar may show what the victims' survivors are going through. If the news story tells the reader an Army commissary will start selling a new item --horsemeat --next month, the sidebar may show customer reaction.

This points out the difference between telling and showing. Let the facts in the news story tell; let the sidebar show. Readers get the five W's and the H in the news or feature story. The sidebar can help them relate to the facts and bring facts closer to home. Facts and additional information can be included in the sidebar to support the news.

FINDING SIDEBARS

How do you find the sidebar idea? Many reporters discover a sidebar idea while covering a news event. A journalist covering a routine change of command ceremony may find the new commander is a Medal of Honor winner. After interviewing the new commander, the journalist turns in the change of command ceremony story and a sidebar on the commander. Readers get not only the news of the change of command, they also get a story that lets them know something about the new boss.

For the most part, sidebars aren't planned. It will take some digging and some legwork, but even the most routine news story can be complemented with a sidebar.

WRITING SIDEBARS

In writing the sidebar, a brief tieback to the news story or news feature must be included in the lead to make it clear to the reader that the stories go together. The tieback may be as brief as "...a result of Friday's bridge collapse here..." or "... commissary customers' reactions to the addition of horsemeat here..." The tieback simply lets the reader know the news story and sidebar are like the motorcycle and sidecar --they go together.

Although it's a temptation, resist the urge to overwrite. Don't get carried away with your words. The sidebar story should be fairly brief so it can be placed next to or near the news or feature story.

How brief is brief? That depends on the length of your news story. Sidebars may be longer or shorter than the news story. However, if your news story is 20 column inches, chances are you can cut some of the sidebar. Be ruthless when you take pencil to your copy. It will help keep the sidebar brief. Placement of the sidebar, used in conjunction with the tieback, will show the connection between the stories.

A sidebar, however, should not be confused with a multi-part article or a straight second-day follow up story. It is an individual story which grows out of a larger overall story.

Focus your attention on:

- o description
- o transitions
- o mood
- o theme

Use words and phrases that will appeal to the reader's five senses. Show the reader what you have told him in the news or feature story. The following guidelines can be used when writing sidebars:

- o Focus the sidebar on a single aspect of the main story.
- o Write the lead to your sidebar with an appropriate tie-back to the main story.

- o Do not repeat information or quotes found in the main story.
- o Write the sidebar in news or appropriate feature style.
- o Make sure the story is free of factual error.
- o Make sure your sidebar is free of libelous statements and does not violate security, accuracy, policy or propriety.
- o Do not violate the Associated Press Stylebook, and ensure correct use of spelling, grammar, punctuation or syntax.

PRACTICE EXERCISE

LESSON 4

SUBCOURSE NO. DI0240

WRITING SIDEBARS

INSTRUCTIONS:

Review the material in this lesson. Answer the questions below by circling the "T" or "F" next to each question. Compare your answers with the answer key on the next page.

- T F 1. A sidebar can help a reader relate to the cold, hard facts of a news or feature story.
- T F 2. In writing a sidebar, a brief tieback to the news story or news feature must be included in the text.
- T F 3. The sidebar story should be fairly brief so that it can be placed next to the news or feature story.

ANSWER KEY
PRACTICE EXERCISE
LESSON 4
SUBCOURSE NO. DI0240
WRITING SIDEBARS

1. True (Page 28)
2. True (Page 29)
3. True (Page 29)

LESSON FIVE

WRITING EDITORIALS

46Q Soldier's Manual Task: 214-176-2422

OVERVIEW

LESSON DESCRIPTION:

In this lesson you will learn to recognize the concept, purpose, structure and different types of editorials.

TERMINAL LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

ACTION: Define the editorial, understand the purpose and structure of the editorial and identify the different types of editorials.

CONDITION: You are given the material presented in this lesson.

STANDARD: Perform all the duties described in this lesson.

REFERENCE: The material contained in this lesson was derived from:

STP 46-46Q14-SM-TG, Journalist
DINFOS Journalism Handbook

WRITING EDITORIALS

INTRODUCTION

Ask a journalist to write an editorial and he can think of a thousand things that need to be said. Military reporters are observers of one of the largest government agencies in the world, and they know what needs to be fixed and what doesn't. But before the young writer begins campaigning via "his" editorial page, there are a few things he must know. First, military journalists must understand the purposes of editorials in military publications. Then, they must know what to write editorials about.

Editorial pages exist to support the command. A military editorial writer's job is not crusading to defend First Amendment rights. The job of an Army editorial writer is to support the command and its command information objectives.

That doesn't mean your editorial pages can't be lively and useful. The best editorial pages cover controversy from all sides. They give voice to members of the command as well as the commander. They treat repetitive, even boring, subjects inventively.

EDITORIAL TOPICS

The editorials you write must be of interest to the Army audience. The topics must be written to comply with the commander's command information objectives and may not violate Army policies or regulations.

Often your editor or commander will assign the topic. You may have opportunities to write editorials on a variety of subjects to support community goals, local and Armywide command information programs. Sometimes you will determine the subject of the editorial. When you get to choose the topic, be sure to select one of interest to your audience while also supporting command information goals.

The following subjects are not allowed in military editorials:

- o taking positions on political parties, candidates or politically active groups
- o criticism of a host country or discussion of its politics
- o subjects that discredit the Army or your post, even if the civilian press publicizes the matter
- o attacks on, or ridicule of, the military, its policies, or its members

- o belittling any race, religion, or culture
- o personal pet peeves

DEFINING THE EDITORIAL

Editorials can best be understood by comparing them to other journalistic forms and describing the function each serves.

Straight news stories report the facts without embellishment or conclusions. Interpretative reports explain the news in terms of cause and effect, adding much more in-depth coverage and analysis. Features provide human interest information. Editorials offer opinions and views about events and their effect on people.

For example, a publication might run a straight news story about a woman officer taking command of an all-male unit. A feature story about the event might emphasize her personality and background. An interpretative story about the same event might give more details and expert testimony explaining the role of women in the Army. An editorial on this subject might urge men to give women equal respect and treatment.

TYPES OF EDITORIALS

Whatever the definition, editorials usually serve one of three functions. They:

- o inform
- o influence
- o entertain

Inform

Many military editorials are informative. Some examples include explanation of a new dress code, effects of drug abuse in which the conclusion is only implied and safety precautions for holiday driving.

Influence

This editorial tries either to convert the reader to the writer's (or the command's) viewpoint, or to help him crystallize thoughts on an issue. It uses argument to sway readers to a point of view. These editorials usually include a call to action asking the reader to do something or avoid something.

A good approach in editorials designed to influence is to state the problem, define it, suggest possible solutions and offer a decision on which of the alternatives would be the best choice. Another approach is to state your subject and point of view in the lead, then back up your editorial opinion with logic. No matter what approach is chosen, this editorial must show evidence of sound reasoning and diligent, accurate research.

A good balance of information considering all possible points of view will give the reader the idea that the article and the publication's editorial policy are worthy of consideration.

Entertain

Editorials written to entertain provide insightful, colorful and sometimes humorous commentary. They may present an ironic poke at man's weaknesses or shortcomings. They may look back at the "good old days," reflect a human interest angle at changes in the news or simply reflect on some aspect of life.

A well-written entertainment editorial uses a quick jab of humor or insightful quip to make an editorial point much quicker and more effective than can a dry sober article on the same subject.

Use caution with this technique. Entertainment, particularly humor, is difficult to master and is easily overdone by novices. Also, some people might not appreciate the humor, depending on the subject.

MAINTAINING OBJECTIVITY IN EDITORIALS

An editorial generally forces the writer to take a side. Still, the writer must remain objective, to the degree that all sides of an issue are presented in the editorial. The key to objectivity is research. The editorial writer should arrive at a subjective viewpoint through objective research.

Research

Writing an editorial or an opinion statement is easy. However, writing an opinion that will sway others requires thorough research on the editorial subject.

Compile as much information as possible before writing the editorial. Read books, magazine and newspaper articles about the topic,. interview people who know a lot about the topic. You should know more about the topic than most readers after your research is done. You'll know the good parts of the point of view and the bad parts. You should anticipate what an opponent to the point of view will say, and address those areas in the editorial.

Presenting opinion

Avoid references like "I think," "we feel," or "as I see it" in editorials. These words indicate the editorial is the opinion of one writer, and that its conclusions are not based on research. Remember the editorial is written to support command objectives. It should be anonymous and reflect the views of the command. When you express opinion, be sure your logic is correct. Conclusions must be drawn from stated facts. Your editorial's effectiveness depends on your reasoned argument.

Look at the following examples:

Poor "I think that NCOs should spend more tie listening to soldiers and trying to help them solve their problems."

Better "NCOs are charged with taking care of soldiers. One way of doing this is for NCOs to spend time listening to soldiers and helping them find solutions to their problems."

Presenting all sides

Include all sides of a topic to make it credible. Sometimes it will be like having an argument with yourself. If you find you lose the argument, it's a good idea to select a different topic. Avoid topics on which you have strong views -- unless you're sure you can present a fair, unbiased appraisal of the issue.

Attributing facts

Identify examples and sources fully. Remember that the reader may not have the same background you do and may not know the same people or references. However, too many references may bog down the reader.

While the editorial is an "opinion piece," it must be based on facts. Those facts should be easily identified. If you use facts that are not common knowledge, be sure to attribute your information.

MAINTAINING SECURITY, ACCURACY, POLICY AND PROPRIETY

As with all Army journalism, editorial writing must conform with the principles of SAPP -- security, accuracy, policy and propriety.

Security

Operational security is a must in the Army. In addition to classified information, the editorial writer must be on the lookout for sensitive information. In an editorial you may provide information to potential enemies without realizing it, Think security, especially when you are write about unit strengths and capabilities or about plans for exercises and operations.

Accuracy

Accuracy is a must in all journalistic writing. For the editorial writer to maintain credibility, he must ensure the facts on which the editorial is based are correct.

Policy

Basic public affairs policy is spelled out in Army Regulations 360-5, Public Information, and in 360-81, Command Information Program. In addition, editorial writers must be aware of the Army's policy to protect the privacy of individuals.

Propriety

Propriety is doing what is right or proper. As an editorial writer it is your responsibility to ensure that the editorial is in good taste and doesn't violate the sensitivities of your readers.

THINGS TO AVOID IN EDITORIALS

There are several elements that you should avoid in editorials:

- o vulgarity
- o obscenity
- o lewdness
- o gore
- o perversion
- o excessive violence
- o information which holds the service or its members up to ridicule

COMMENTARIES

Commentaries usually are a recurring portion of the editorial page written by one writer, who takes readers on a verbal trip to get readers to think and be aware of their surroundings and other people.

The commentary is informative and tries to influence. It offers insightful, colorful and sometimes humorous entertainment. Well written, they can often make an editorial point quicker and more effectively than a dry, somber piece on the same subject.

PRACTICE EXERCISE

LESSON 5

SUBCOURSE NO. DI0240

WRITING EDITORIALS

INSTRUCTIONS:

Review the material in this lesson. Answer the questions below by circling the "T" or "F" next to each question. Compare your answers with the answer key on the next page.

- T F 1. It's okay to write an editorial on subjects that discredit the Army or your post, provided the civilian press publicizes the matter.
- T F 2. Informative editorials use argument to sway readers to a point of view.
- T F 3. The editorial writer should arrive at a subjective viewpoint through objective research.
- T F 4. When you express opinions in an editorial, you can voice your own opinion with phrases such as "we feel."
- T F 5. In addition to conforming to Army policy, editorial writers must also be aware of the Army's efforts to protect the privacy of individuals.

ANSWER KEY

PRACTICE EXERCISE

LESSON 5

SUBCOURSE NO. D10240

WRITING EDITORIALS

1. False (Page 34)
2. False (Page 35)
3. True (Page 36)
4. False (Page 37)
5. True (Page 38)

LESSON SIX

EDITORIAL CONSTRUCTION

46Q Soldier's Manual Task: 214-176-2422

OVERVIEW

LESSON DESCRIPTION:

In this lesson you will learn about the four parts of an editorial, the different approaches to editorial titles and the three types of conclusions most commonly used in editorial writing.

TERMINAL LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

ACTION: Recognize the four parts of an editorial, understand the various approaches to developing editorial titles and identify the three most commonly used types of editorials.

CONDITION: You are given the material presented in this lesson.

STANDARD: Perform all the duties described in this lesson.

REFERENCE: The material contained in this lesson was derived from:

STP 46-46Q14-SM-TG, Journalist
DINFOS Journalism Handbook

EDITORIAL CONSTRUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Editorials have four parts:

- o title
- o lead
- o body
- o conclusion

The title and lead -must grab the reader's attention and hold it long enough to get him into the body, which is the real meat of the article. The conclusion helps direct action or summarize the argument or point of view.

TITLE

The title serves as the headline for your editorial. The title should attract reader attention. It can also indicate the subject of the editorial. The title can be constructed in normal subject-verb-object form like other headlines, but --unlike news headlines --it may also be in label form without a verb.

Some editorial titles do not indicate the subject, but tease the reader into reading the editorial to learn more about it. For example, an editorial about venereal disease may have a title, "How did it all start?" Or an editorial about acronyms might have a title like, "FDR started it all."

The following list gives you a start in developing a variety of approaches to editorial titles:

- o Label or descriptive --a simple phrase title giving the subject of an article. These titles may not generate much reader interest unless the subject itself is interesting or provocative.
- o Striking statement --a brief phrase or sentence designed to provoke reader interest such as "Smoking can kill you, even if you don't smoke!"
- o Quote --a short, notable quotation, taken directly from the text. These usually center on the main point of the article. For example, "I have a dream."
- o Parody or literary allusion --a take off on some literary work, quote, movie or well-known saying. Just make sure the

majority of readers will easily recognize the reference, such as, "Give me liberty or give me breath. "

- o Alliteration --a phrase or sentence with words repeating the initial sound. (EXAMPLE: wet and wild)
- o Question --a device used to arouse the reader's curiosity or interest with an important issue or light twisting of a common phrase. Be careful when using a question title not to use a question that can be answered with a simple "yes" or "no," or "I don't care."
- o Direct address --talks directly to the reader, is usually a command or request.

LEAD

The lead indicates what is to come in the body of the editorial. The editorial lead is not limited to one sentence. It may consist of more than one paragraph. Unlike the news lead, the editorial lead does not have to summarize the article, or include the important W's and the H. The tone of an editorial is set by the lead. You can build leads for editorials around any of the title types that help explain or introduce your point of view. The lead should entice the readers much like feature leads do. Leads are usually written after the outline for the body of the story is developed. By knowing how the editorial will be structured, you can design a lead that more effectively "grabs" or pulls the reader into the body.

BODY

The body is the meat of the editorial. It contains the support for your position. The reasons the reader should agree with the editorial are contained in the body. The body of an editorial represents the largest amount of information. Unlike straight news writing (important facts first and significant details in descending order) editorial writing offers the essence of the article in the body.

Your first step in developing the body is listing the main points the editorial will cover. From these points you can often develop an outline for the body. This outline guides you through the body and helps you in organizing the lead and conclusion of the editorial.

Whatever method or purpose you use, the title, lead, body and conclusion must flow from one to the other in logical order, with a definite purpose. Don't trick the reader by starting with a joke and ending with a serious call to action. Don't pose a problem without offering some kind of solution. Don't attempt to change a reader's point of view or to gain

acceptance of an idea or policy with poorly researched, haphazardly organized material.

CONCLUSION

In an editorial written to persuade, the conclusion wraps up and calls for action. In an editorial written to inform, the conclusion will put all the data into perspective and tie back to the main theme or issue. The entertainment editorial's conclusion might offer a humorous or insightful aspect saved just for that purpose.

The three conclusions most commonly used in editorials are:

- o Call for action --Ask the reader to do something or not to do something. Don't confuse this type of conclusion with making demands by using expressions like "In our opinion...." or "As we see it" or "We demand that...." Avoid the imperative voice. Don't give orders.
- o Summary --Summarize your main points. You have a point to make, so make it simple and clear.
- o Quotable --Leave the reader with a brief, appropriate, quotable statement. Use quotes to support a position or for rebuttal.

The editorial conclusion can be any combination of the three types. You will learn from experience how to match a conclusion with different types of editorials.

ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES

Other tips to keep in mind when writing editorials:

Don't embarrass your commander. Controversy may be appropriate in your editorial, but the conclusion should reflect command policy. Explain what is being done about a problem. Also, don't take on Congress, governmental agencies or the local community.

Avoid references like "I think," or "We feel" or "As I see it" in editorials. Remember editorials are anonymous and reflect the views of the command.

Include all sides of a topic to make it credible. Sometimes it will be like having an argument with yourself. If you find you lose the argument, however, it's a good idea to select a different topic. Avoid subjects on which you have strong emotional views --unless you're sure you can present a fair, unbiased appraisal of the issue.

Take a novel approach to commonplace subjects. Topics such as safety, the Combined Federal Campaign and drug abuse require innovative, descriptive, action-packed writing to entice and convince the reader. Reverse psychology may work in some cases.

Avoid editorial topics that are too political or unsuitable for your command level. Remember that your post commander does not set national defense policy. You cannot say editorially that a given deployment or military action is good or bad.

Make sure everything is clear to readers seeing the editorial for the first time. Can they easily figure out your meanings?

Identify examples and sources fully. Remember that the reader may not have the same background you do and may not know the same persons or references. However, excessive references will bog down the reader.

Make sure your logic is correct and direct. Your editorial's effectiveness depends on your clear, reasoned argument.

Avoid preaching or demanding that readers do something. Don't say, "Soldiers will..." or "Soldiers should.. ."

Profanity is not allowed in military newspapers.

Reduce statistics to conversational examples. Instead of just saying "54,135 square miles," also say "about the size of Illinois."

" Keep it short. Many readers tend to shy away from long editorials. Keep them crisp and interesting.

If you can support command policies with appealing editorials, you'll more likely get commander confidence, enabling you to tackle some of the sensitive issues on your installation. Don't look for dirt. Look for solutions.

Finally, editorials for military publications should meet the following criteria:

- o The editorial's topic must be appropriate, without violating or criticizing Army or command policy.
- o The editorial should be written to inform, influence or entertain the reader.
- o Ensure that the story includes four parts: the title, lead, body and conclusion.
- o The subject must be thoroughly researched.
- o All facts must be presented objectively, and all sides of the argument addressed.

- o Make sure that all facts that are not readily verifiable are attributed.
- o The story should be written so that it flows from one thought to the next in logical sequence.
- o Unnecessarily long words or sentences should be avoided.
- o The editorial and its subject matter must not violate security, accuracy, policy or propriety.
- o Ensure that the story is written without violating the Associated Press Stylebook and without errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar or syntax.

PRACTICE EXERCISE

LESSON 6

SUBCOURSE NO. DI0240

EDITORIAL CONSTRUCTION

INSTRUCTIONS:

Review the material in this lesson. Answer the questions below by circling the "T" or "F" next to each question. Compare your answers with the answer key on the next page.

- T F 1. The lead serves as the headline of your editorial.
- T F 2. Editorial titles must indicate the subject.
- T F 3. Alliteration is a brief phrase or sentence designed to provoke reader interest.
- T F 4. The body is the meat of the editorial.
- T F 5. The intent of the conclusion of an editorial written to persuade is a call for action.

ANSWER KEY

LESSON 6

SUBCOURSE NO. DI0240

EDITORIAL CONSTRUCTION

1. False (Page 44)
2. False (Page 43)
3. False (Page 44)
4. True (Page 45)
5. True (Page 45)

FORWARD TO APPENDICES

The following stories have been reproduced as appendices to illustrate the effective use of the key elements of feature stories and editorials.

Appendix A, "**Air Force engineers fire feathered fodder using new 'rooster booster' gun to test jet aircraft windshields**" uses the standard feature story format. It was written by Joan Carter, a former DINFOS student.

Appendix B, "**Mildred doesn't drink here anymore,**" a feature detailing the struggles of a recovered alcoholic, was written by Army Capt. John H. Colt.

Appendix C includes two editorials, "**Mistakes are for learning,**" and "**You pay for vandalism.**"

Appendix D contains another editorial which is informative and addresses a medical problem common among black men -- pseudofolliculitis, or ingrown beard. This editorial comes from the American Forces Press Service, a branch of the American Forces Information Service.

Appendix A

AF engineers fire feathered fodder using new 'rooster booster' gun to test jet aircraft windshields

An ironic teaser lead. The writer resisted some of the more ridiculous possibilities.

The thesis describes a serious problem. It shows the need for such testing. We know why this story is being told. Notice how the five W's and H are covered in these first four sentences.

The body includes data and explanation. Note the action verbs and concrete nouns. Note how the quotes are bright. Other material is paraphrased.

A wrap-up ending, simple and effective.

Chicken is on the menu at Arnold Air Force Station Saturday, but it won't be served in the dining hall. Instead it will be blasted out of a new "chicken gun" at 300 miles per hour in a special test of aircraft windshields.

The Air Force tests windshield strength because flying birds can damage them and endanger aircrews. Last year, 1,072 "birdstrikes" cost \$5.5 million in damages to 446 aircraft, according to the Bird Aircraft Strike Hazard team of the Engineering and Services Center.

The tests use chicken carcasses because experiments with water bags and simulated birds didn't give accurate data, said Peter M. Helmbock, project manager.

Willie F. Williams, the man who fires the gun, said, "Plastic chickens don't have the same consistency or bone structure as real birds."

The chicken gun, known as the "rooster booster," hurls chicken carcasses through a 33-foot tube at the windshield of a simulated cockpit. At 300 miles per hour the poultry projectiles smack the windshields with a force of five and one-half tons.

An open shed houses the high technology equipment used to measure the results of the blasts. Space-age pulsars throb their radio waves rhythmically at the carcasses in flight. Ultra-high-speed motion picture cameras record the birds' flights and impact.

These tests help engineers develop lightweight, transparent windshields able to withstand impact forces without breaking, shattering or excessive bending, Helmbock said.

Saturday's test will feature an instrumented mannequin for the first time. This life-sized test dummy will help engineers measure hazards to the jet aircraft crews.

The process has aroused some controversy, Helmbock said.

"I never thought we'd have so many problems with public opinion. The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals was concerned about the use of real chickens," he said. "We finally worked out an arrangement they can live with."

Testing uses dead chickens culled by local chicken farmers, Helmbock said.

Lt. Col. Deborah J. Lowe, commander of the 923rd Engineering Squadron, said the chickens would be sold "as tough old roasters" if the Air Force didn't buy them.

"ASPCA finally gave us their blessing when we explained our program to them," she said.

Although these chickens will never end up on Arnold's dining hall table, they are useful. They help make flying safer so aircrews can enjoy their next chicken dinners.

Mildred doesn't drink here anymore

It's a Saturday afternoon and all around the Fort Harrison Golf Club happy young soldiers from the Troop Brigade are taking long pulls from frosted glasses of beer. They are listening to the juke box and enjoying a blessed afternoon off from their training week.

Pvt. 2 Mildred N. Adams has the same flushed expression as the rest. She is relieved, she said, that her first week as a basic journalism student at the Defense Information School here is over.

She taps a slender finger absently against her frosted glass as a "Men at Work" tune blares from the juke box. She smiles broadly at the antics of a young trooper at the next table.

But Mildred's glass is full of diet cola, not beer. And this day is special, like every other in her life since June 21, 1981. She has been sober since then.

Mildred Adams, 23, is a recovered alcoholic.

"I used to be ashamed to tell anyone. I thought I was the only person in the world who had the problem," she said.

She has been in the Army six months. She made no secret about her former drinking problem when she enlisted. Mildred said.

"I told the recruiter in Los Angeles that I was a recovered alcoholic," she said. "He looked me right in the eye, as if he knew something from personal experience, and he answered, 'Who isn't?'"

She said the recruiter was the first in a long line of Army people who would help her bolster a self-image that had been tarnished by two years of problem drinking.

During the normal medical examination process for enlistment into the Army, Mildred underwent an extensive psychiatric evaluation. She passed with flying colors, she said.

"It was one of the happiest days of my life," she said.

She is the daughter of a Chicago steel worker who was divorced from her mother when Mildred was in 4th grade.

She said she now realizes that much of her negative self-image had to do with the childhood pain of imagined rejection by her mother.

After high school, she went to Marquette University for a year. Soon disenchanted with college life, she decided to see more of the country, to live a totally independent life.

She left on a Greyhound bus for Los Angeles. When she arrived there on a muggy February morning she had only \$7 left.

"I had a friend there and she met me. I went out to find a job. The only one I could get was as a waitress working for tips in a diner," Mildred said.

She slept on a couch in her friend's apartment. They had different schedules. Mildred was alone at night, barely 20 years old at the time, and she was afraid, she said.

"That's when my drinking progressed," she said. "I would come home from work at night exhausted. But I couldn't sleep. I didn't have but one friend, and she wasn't around that much.

I started drinking to go to sleep at night."

After a year of living in fear and loneliness, Mildred began to realize she had developed a problem with drinking. She went to an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting.

"That was the beginning of a new me, a new life," she said.

She enrolled in a junior college in Los Angeles and studied music, art and general education subjects. She soon became interested in the ROTC unit on campus.

She said she liked the order, the precision and the discipline of the unit.

She had always enjoyed physical activity. At 5 feet 6 inches tall and 115 pounds, she thought she could compete in a military environment. She met the Army recruiter through her ROTC contacts and enlisted.

Basic training at Fort Ord, Calif., was the most formidable challenge of her life, she said.

"I was afraid and bewildered, which I guess is the common reaction to basic. But I had so much support in the AA meetings that I felt cut off in basic. I was afraid I'd slip," she said.

Nagging at the back of her mind all the time was the notion that she might fall, might fall back into a drinking pattern because of the stress of basic training, she said.

In her sixth week of basic training, she broke down and cried, she said. Her drill sergeant saw her and called her into his office.

She told him that she was a recovered alcoholic, that she was afraid, that she needed to attend the AA meetings for support.

"He told me that all I needed was self-confidence. He said he would be there every time it looked like I was going to stumble. He told me I was a good troop and he was going to see me through, that he would be the support I needed," she said.

"He never made it any easier," she said. "But he reinforced everything I did right. I owe him a lot."

Mildred took another sip of her diet cola, and smiled. Her long brown hair was combed out and she looked trim and fit in a pair of black jeans and a striped shirt. Her eyes are blue, expressive of a clear determination.

Becoming an Army journalist, she said, is the fulfillment of a dream.

"I had a secret desire to be a writer," she said. "I can hardly believe that I'm learning how to be one."

Her other hobby is music, she said, and writing songs.

But for now it is the Army and journalism for her.

"I feel very grateful. They could have said no to me back in L.A. They might not have taken a chance on me," she said.

Air Force Tech. Sgt. James A. Dowd, Mildred's public affairs instructor at the Defense Information School, summed up his own feelings about her.

"She has a lot of guts," he said. "She's open and honest about her former problem. If they gave medals for that kind of bravery, I'd put her in for one."

Mistakes are for learning

The following editorial is reproduced from the Sept. 2, 1983, Seacoast Flyer, attributed to Maj. Ronald A. Roye of Goodfellow Air Force Base, Texas. The editorial was distributed by the U.S. Air Force Air Training Command News Service. The information was taken from an editorial written by Ted W. Engstrom, president of World Vision International.

One obstacle we all face in attempting to reach our potential is the fear of making a mistake. Yet achievement is based upon failure, usually one failure after another.

After 700 unsuccessful experiments to develop the incandescent light, Thomas Edison encouraged his dejected assistants, "Don't call it a mistake, call it an education. Now we know 700 things not to do."

Mistakes. No one is immune. Yet when we look at ourselves, we tend to be mercilessly critical. We speak of ourselves as failures.

American inventor Charles Kettering once said: "You will never stub your toe standing still. The faster you go, the more chance there

is of stubbing your toe, but the more chance you have of getting somewhere." Which translates: When you don't know what to do, do SOMETHING!

Psychologists say that action—any kind of action—is a tremendous cure for depression, even if it's no more than a walk around the block.

Today is a good day to start believing you don't need to live a life of quiet desperation, fearful of any new challenges. You can begin to enjoy using and developing your gifts.

Fear of failure is no excuse for doing nothing. Remember, to do nothing for fear of making a mistake could be the greatest mistake of all.

Make today the day you begin to chip at that mountain of self-doubt. You can read books about how to do it. You can attend seminars. You can think about it until the cows come home. But only you can put mallet to chisel.

Remember, it's OK to stub your toe!

'Somebody' did it

You pay for vandalism

The following is edited from an editorial written by Spc. Steve Lawrence from the July 29, 1982, Fort Campbell Courier.

Mr. Somebody is a special breed of criminal at Fort Campbell.

The victims of almost every one of his crimes are you and I. A percentage of our tax dollar pays for Somebody's kicks.

Have you ever wondered why none of the post parks and outdoor recreational facilities have public restrooms? You can thank Somebody for that!

Somebody literally destroyed all the public restrooms on post. What stands in their places

today are portable toilet facilities, themselves targets of our anonymous vandal.

Ever wondered why so many signs on post are either missing, mangled or full of bullet holes?

Or why the military police have had to beef up patrols around the Cole Park Golf Course, Pratt Museum and outdoor recreation areas?

The answer, plain and simple, is vandalism! Somebody's at it again.

Somebody ought to report these vandals. How about you and I?

TITLE	<h1>Soldiers with beards?</h1>
LEAD (problem posed)	<p>Misunderstanding is the cause of many racial problems in the military. One question that has arisen is, "Why are some black men allowed to wear beards, while the rest of us are forbidden?"</p>
BODY (Fact 1: how caused)	<p>It's not what some people are calling it—reverse discrimination. It's a medical problem common to young men and particularly to black men, and it's called pseudofolliculitis.</p> <p>The disease, also called ingrown beard, is a chronic, pimple-like inflammation of the beard area, particularly along and below the jawline and on the throat, and once started, may be cured by letting the beard grow and proper hygiene.</p> <p>Not caused by shaving as some people think, ingrown beard is caused by the way a man's beard grows. The black man's beard grows in a curved follicle, and describes a short arc so that a beard hair comes right back in contact with the skin.</p>
(Fact 2: effect)	<p>The end of the beard hair may just slide along the skin until a harmless coil has formed, but it may also penetrate the skin and be driven through the stratum corneum, the epidermis and into the dermis (three layers of the skin).</p> <p>An inflammatory reaction occurs, and usually, a simple abscess develops and is aggravated by the presence of skin bacteria. This is the disease, pseudofolliculitis, or ingrown beard.</p> <p>Once the disease has started and been diagnosed, the cure is relatively simple: don't shave. Allowing the beard to grow results in a temporary worsening of the disease as the hair penetrates deeper into the skin, but in approximately two weeks, the hair will begin to pull back out of the abscess.</p> <p>Eventually, the hair pulls completely free of the skin and the abscess fades away after the disease has run its course which usually takes from two to three months.</p> <p>Resumption of shaving does not mean a certain return of ingrown beard and, in fact, sticking to a rigid schedule of shaving is the basic preventive measure in combating ingrown beard.</p> <p>Using a very low setting on an adjustable razor and shaving often enough so that the hair does not grow long enough to complete its arc and dig into the skin is recommended.</p> <p>Shaving with a low blade angle, it is almost impossible to cut the skin or even the tops off of bumps or pimples which must be particularly avoided by black men. It is sometimes recommended that they leave a light stubble.</p> <p>Scrubbing the beard area daily will help to dislodge any hairs that might be cutting into the skin, and they can also be freed manually, with a sharp toothpick. They should not be plucked, but left until the next shave.</p>
CONCLUSION (recap and tieback; call to action)	<p>So, the next time you see a black man in uniform with a beard, you don't have to wonder just why he's getting away with something you can't. He's probably got pseudofolliculitis, and it's being treated medically by a popular method—letting the beard grow. (AFPS)</p>