

UNITED STATES MILITARY ENTRANCE PROCESSING COMMAND

Messenger

WRITING STORIES
AND
SUBMITTING TO
MESSENGER
MAGAZINE




Messenger magazine publishes a variety of stories. To view past issues for inspiration and guidance, visit: <https://www.mepcom.army.mil/Media/Messenger/>

Submissions do not have to be novels. Often, one page in Microsoft Word is plenty of space to get your point across.

When gathering your information remember the Five W's:

- Who
- What
- When
- Where
- Why



WHAT? WHEN? WHERE?
WHO? WHY?

Who is the story about? Who is affected? Who benefits?

This could be a singular person, or your entire command. When identifying individuals, remember to include job title and/or military rank.

What has happened? What are the outcomes? What does this mean to the reader?

This could be something that has already happened, is currently happening, or will happen in the future.

When did it or will it happen (dates)? Will there be any updates? Estimated timeframes can work for future projects.

Where is this taking place? Is there a link for readers to learn more?

Why did the event take place? Why is this important?

An easy approach to writing is to tell the story as if you were explaining it to a family member with no knowledge of the military or USMEPCOM. Avoid jargon, or words familiar only to those in the command. Keep it simple. A story just needs an introduction, the body/supporting details and a conclusion.

Stories can highlight a variety of topics including personnel, initiatives, programs, events or activities that support Freedom's Front Door.

Submissions should be in Microsoft Word and sent to derrik.l.noack.civ@army.mil

Articles should be between 150-300 words.

Supporting photos should be emailed as individual attachments. If easier to text photos, please contact derrik.l.noack.civ@army.mil to ask for a cell number.

Provide a caption for the photo explaining who is in it and what they are doing.

Remember to identify those in the photo by first and last name, as well as military rank and or job title.

If photographer credit is not given, photo will be credited as Courtesy photo.

The most common story formats are news articles and feature articles. News articles are direct and provide the facts. Feature articles use sensory words, engaging the reader's imagination.

THE NEWS ARTICLE MARTINI

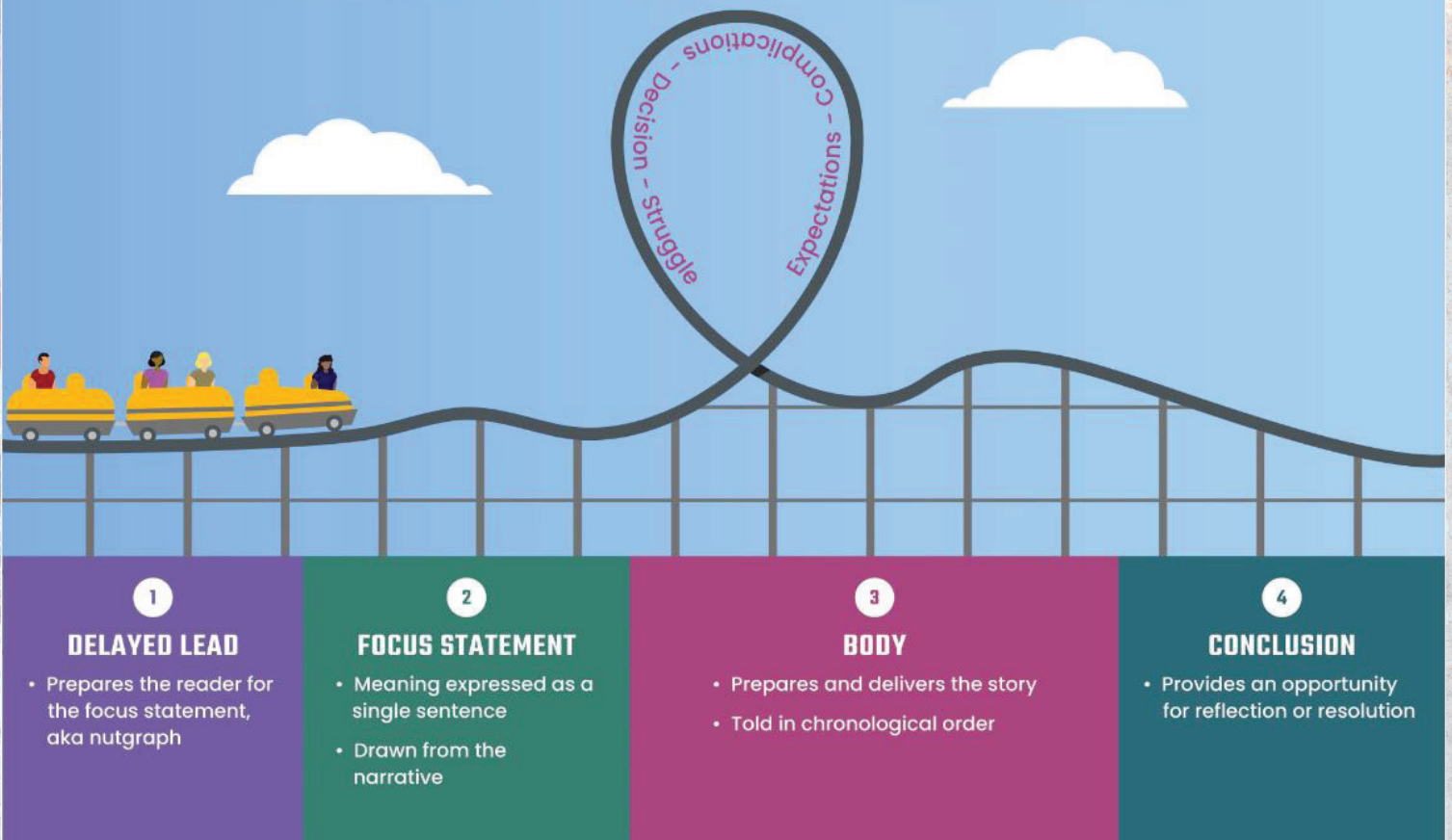
Outline offers the reader an opportunity to take in what's important and keep reading or move on.



News stories need the facts right away. Feature stories can take the reader on a roller coaster that draws them in before providing the facts/body after an interesting lead.

THE FEATURE STORY ROLLERCOASTER

Write a narrative that leads the reader to accept the truth of the focus statement.



A key to writing is to make it relatable. How can you tell the story and have others at the command identify with elements of your article?

Remember to make it understandable. We all want to sound smart and professional, but using big words isn't always the best to keep a reader's attention. To reach the biggest audience, remember to write as if you are explaining it to a family member. Use action words to put spark into your story.

Sometimes the best ideas come when you aren't at your keyboard. The best ideas come to me when I am at the gym. I type them into my notes app and come back to them later. Rome wasn't built in a day. Give yourself plenty of time to flourish out the details of your story.

It's ok to use google! The internet is your best resource. You can find many types of articles online for inspiration or to copy their flow. As long as you aren't taking their words, it isn't stealing. The wheel has already been invented, no need to start from scratch.

Getting started can be the most challenging part. You can spark interest by asking a question, describing a setting or providing background information.

If you want help with getting started, reach out to schedule a Teams meeting. USMEPCOM Messenger staff can help with workshopping a story and developing an outline. To set up a meeting contact derrik.l.noack.civ@army.mil.



Stories are best when accompanied by good photos. A fancy camera isn't necessary anymore to get a high quality image. A smart phone can capture amazing imagery.

Keep these tips in mind when selecting or taking photos to be used alongside your story:

- Focus on the eyes of personnel when taking a photo
- Get closer instead of zooming in for better quality
- Leave a little extra room on all sides of your photo so nothing important is chopped off
- Take more photos than you want or need to have a range of expressions to choose from

Environmental portraits are an easy way to provide visual elements to your story.

An environmental portrait captures the subject in a natural surrounding, like them at work.

The background helps portray an idea about who the subject is or what they do.

Think of environmental photos as somewhere in between candid photography and studio portraiture.

The subject knows you are taking their photo, and can even pose or mimic doing tasks for you to capture.

Environmental photos are basically a posed candid.

The subject knows you are taking photos of them while they go about their daily tasks.



RESOURCES:

[https://www.dvidshub.net/search?filter\[type\]=news](https://www.dvidshub.net/search?filter[type]=news)

DVIDS is a great resource for our genre of writing. You can view stories from all the services and copy their structure.

<https://www.mepcom.army.mil/Media/Messenger/>

View past Messenger volumes to understand how to construct your story, write captions and identify people correctly by their rank and or job title.

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/subject_specific_writing/journalism_and_journalistic_writing/ap_style.html

The Messenger uses Associated Press style for news writing. This site provides an introduction to AP style and some AP style rules.