

# Tips for Writing a Media-Friendly Press Release

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- \* Start with an attention-grabbing headline.
  - What would attract your attention in the morning paper?
- \* Put the most important one or two points in the first paragraph.
  - Write a press release in a way that will connect with people: consider your reader and what will interest them
- \* State clearly and without jargon what is really new and why it matters.
  - Why should a reader care about your findings?
  - It is OK to sacrifice precision for the sake of comprehension
- \* An effective press release combines the basic components of a story in the media with sound bytes from someone who has expertise related to the subject.
  - Include two or three quotes from the authors
  - Quotes should be short, pithy comments
- \* Keep the press release to one page; brevity is important.
  - Reporters are typically pressed for time
  - Some media outlets will reproduce the release verbatim
- \* Provide a clear publication date and contact information
  - Some institutions ask that their press offices be kept in the loop
  - They also might want to be listed as the
  - If possible, include names and contact information for experts who are prepared to comment on the findings but who were not associated with the report
- \* Include one or more images with the press release.
  - Stories are more likely to garner interest if they include an image.
  - Images should be clear and evocative
  - Bear in mind that bones are often unintelligible to the non-expert
  - A good field shot related to the discovery can be a compelling image
- \* Include a web address on the release where reporters can find more information

Summary: The press release should begin with a headline and first paragraph that concisely encapsulates the story. Then the body of the press release includes supporting talking points and main sound bites. Finally the end includes background details and a final quote.