

HOW TO WRITE A SHORT OR LONG ARTICLE

- 1. ANGEBOT/ PITCH :** To get the editor of any publication interested in your story, you have to pitch your story. *Das Angebot, oder der Vorschlag, ist der allererste Schritt.* A few lines, one paragraph, telling the editor why your story must be in the magazine and what makes it interesting and unique. *Sie müssen die Redakteure überzeugen, dass Ihr Artikel für die Publikation unentbehrlich ist!*
- 2. PEG / AUFHÄNGER:** Your pitch must contain a peg. A peg is a brief but clear indication, a compelling reason for why your story is important and relevant for the publication, why your idea will interest readers. *Eine klare aber pointierte Andeutung, warum die Zielleserschaft (target readership) der Publikation Ihren Vorschlag interessant finden wird.*
- 3. WORDCOUNT /WORTZAHL /TEXTLÄNGE:** How long should any article be? A small "item" (*Meldung*) which fits into a box (*Kästchen*), or on a page along with many other similar short items, should not be longer than 50-100 words. A longer article can read between 400-a maximum of 800 words. But longer articles should be accompanied by photos, illustrations, etc. to make them more interesting.
- 4. FILING DATE / ABGABETERMIN /DEADLINE:** This must be strictly adhered for the sake of planning and keeping in mind that a publication is a team effort. *Der allgemeinen Planung zuliebe müssen Sie Ihren Artikel rechtzeitig abgeben, so dass das Layout, das Redigieren, usw. alle rechtzeitig geschehen können.* **Your date to send your pitches for the *Schüler*innen Zeitung* is May 15th.** After a selection of stories has been made by the editor, you will receive an Abgabetermin, the last date by when to send your complete contribution.
- 5. BEGINNING, MIDDLE, END (ANFANG, MITTE, ENDE) :** Obviously, every story must have a beginning, middle and end. But in the world of writing, there are at least 2-3 basic approaches.
a)STYLE 1 - THE INVERTED PYRAMID : This is done for print publications, as newsprint (paper) is expensive and more important news and sudden developments may have to be given priority over your story. For *Kurzmeldungen* or small items, summarize the main point and the most important developments of the story in 4-5 lines in

the very first paragraph. Alle anderen Informationen sollen dann ---je nach Wichtigkeitsgrad von oben nach unten eingeführt werden. This way, the editor can simply take your first paragraph and cut out all else if necessary.

b) STYLE 2 / THE FEATURE STORY: If you have a lot of information and interesting details about a subject, you can write a longer feature. If you employ this style, you do not put all your key information and the “punchline” in the very paragraph. Instead you add “colour”, sounds, description, and build UP the suspense by including a **KICKER** in your first para. *Der Kicker soll den Leser / die Leserin so neugierig machen, dass sie/er weiterlesen will.* The climax of the story should be in the last two paragraphs.

c) STYLE 3 COMBINATION OF PYRAMID, AND FEATURE WITH KICKER: This is a style that combines the shock factor – the “kicker”, but also the inverted pyramid by giving key information in the very first para. But this is generally a style adopted by novelists – the Big Bang beginning. Since we are producing a magazine for casual reading, we will not be adopting this particular style, this is only for your information.

-FACT CHECKING AND RESEARCH

Whether you write news or whether you write fiction in which you refer to real life events, you **MUST** check facts scrupulously.

If you claim that man set foot on the moon in 1969, **CHECK** the date before you send in your story.

If you claim that all left-handers are humorous, **SPEAK** to a few lefthanders and use their quotes to make your story more interesting.

If you claim that the Taj Mahal was built by Shah Jehan, **RESEARCH** history to ensure that is true.

Most research is available online.

-USE WELL-KNOWN, RELIABLE SOURCES OF RESEARCH : As a rule of the thumb, only use well-known research institutions, which are known for expertise in any given field. Eg: If you are writing an article about the experience of teaching foreign languages. **READ** the website of a known language institute like Goethe Institut. **SPEAK / CONTACT** teachers who can answer your question and make your article more interesting by giving you a **QUOTE**. (*Zitate /Stimmen machen eine Geschichte viel interessanter!*)

-TRY TO USE QUOTES – IT ALWAYS MAKES A STORY COME ALIVE, TO ‘HEAR’ REAL VOICES OF REAL PEOPLE. When you quote somebody, you either name them with their permission, also mention their age (these are little details which flesh out a person, make him or her come alive in the mind of the reader) , OR, if they don't wish to be named, you can say ‘ said the shopkeeper, who does not wish to be named. *Wenn jemand anonym bleiben will, muss man seinen Wunsch respektieren!*

-TRY TO DESCRIBE THE SURROUNDINGS, SOUNDS AND SMELLS. DOING SO PAINTS A PICTURE IN THE MIND OF THE READER AND MAKES EVEN THE MOST BORING INTERVIEW / ARTICLE COME ALIVE. Eg: The engineering industry is not doing very well and is plagued by attrition, the engineer said, *‘as he repaired his son’s bicycle. The sun beat down upon the courtyard, ard, but there was a light breeze, which carried the fragrance of jasmine flowers from the park.*

-TRY AND USE HUMOUR IN A STORY, especially if it is on a relatively dull or serious subject. You don't have to force the humour, just add elements if you yourself see something funny in what you are writing about. *Bleiben Sie leicht, locker und lustig. Genießen Sie das Schreiben!*

-NEVER REPRODUCE WRITING BY OTHER PEOPLE AS YOUR OWN: This is a very serious offence, it's called plagiarism. (*Das Plagiat / literarischer Diebstahl!*) It is very easy to be caught. So please never take other people's lines, and pass them off as your own.

KEEP IT SIMPLE: Don't push language into complicated knots. Don't attempt constructions in German that you are not familiar with. NEVER use Google translate ☺ We will edit your work and get back to you with questions, if something is not clear. On your part, just keep it simple, sweet and straight. *Kurz, knapp, sauber !*

Viel Glück!

Padma Rao
Für Max Mueller Bhavan