

News analysis basics: a model

Pattern of a news analysis article:

The following is a basic outline of a news analysis article. It is a formulaic oversimplification, to be sure, but still, many journalists have found this pattern approach useful as a guide, and it can help to get journalists thinking about structure. It should not be seen as an ironclad system, more a useful framework to start planning your article.

Title:	don't worry about a title; the editor will most likely write one
Lead:	10 to 15 words explaining what has happened, where, when and why it is important
Paragraph 1 (news):	recount what has happened, who is involved in the event, where it happened, and when; this is a "taster" of the event, not every detail
Paragraph 2 (significance):	explain why the new event is significant, tell the reader what the new event is likely to affect, how is the situation in the country likely to change as a result of this event
Paragraph 3 & 4 (context):	very short background, explaining as briefly as possible the key events preceding this new event, putting this latest event into the context of recent developments
Then arguments proving your lead:	three or four sets of two or three paragraphs each, building your argument as you go. A single set of paragraphs can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • expand the background of the situation, presenting a fuller series of events leading up to this new event (in chronological order), or • present a series of balancing quotes commenting on the new event, or • describe a sub-issue related to the new event and its meaning.
Final paragraph:	conclude with a reminder why the new event is important, leave a lasting image in the reader's mind, and never add new material here

Three notes on length:

Sentence length:	no longer than 25 words
Paragraph length:	one or two sentences in the initial summary paragraphs (1 & 2); later paragraphs can be three or four sentences
Article length:	700-900 words