

MC 102

Midterm 02

Write a 200 to 250 word news story using the following information.

- City council meeting last night; opened with prayer and reading of the minutes from last meeting.
- Discussed bids for running cafeteria in the city police station; no action taken.
- Discussing proposal by member Darden Clarke to strengthen city's leash law; proposal would make it a misdemeanor (a crime) to own a dog that had bitten someone; a person convicted for owning such a dog could be fined up to five hundred dollars and spent five nights in jail; large crowd in the city council room to hear this debate – 200, about half in favor of the law and half against.
- Clarke: "We got to do something to stop this plague of dog bites in this city. Over the past month I've had complaints from at least five people in my district who have complained about being bitten or threatened by dog. This is a problem of irresponsible ownership. I believe that we need this law to get the attention of dog owners and tell them we expect them to act responsibly."
- John Simpson: "This is an idiotic approach to what may or may not be a serious problem. I haven't had any complaints about dogs from my constituents. You don't stop dog biting by incarcerating the owners." Simpson is another member of the city council.
- Debate lasts for over 1 hour; during which time, some of the people who were there were given a chance to speak. One man brought in his three dogs, right there into the council chamber. Mayor ordered him to leave when they started barking. Mayor is Cathy Marshall.
- Randy Noble: "I believe the laws we have are strong enough. The city should just enforce them better. Most dog owners like I – we don't have no problem with the laws as they now stand, but it don't do no good to threaten us with jail." Noble lives at 1717 Carriage Lane and is a welder with Empire Steel Company.
- Bradley Carden: "No dog owner in the city is going to vote for you guys again if you pass a law like this one." Carden lives at 6512 Mimosa Tree Road.
- Diane Wallace: "Look at this little girl and tell me who is responsible for this. Tell me who should be held accountable for the pain that this little girl has and the fear she had to carry with her when she plays in her own neighborhood." Diane was highly emotional and distraught and crying when she spoke to the city council; she cried during her speech; she had her child, Denise, who she said was five years old, there with her; Denise's legs were bandaged; Diane said she had been bitten three times by a neighbor's dog last week.
- Lots of debate and argument on this; most council members spoke on the issue so that by the time the vote was taken it was no surprise to anyone at all that the city council defeated the proposal by a 5 to two vote, and nobody abstained.

Checklist

Before turning in your midterm, check the following:
Information should be presented in descending order of importance.

Leads

- one sentence, 30-35 words maximum
- lead tells the most important information in the story and gives specific facts.

Second paragraph

- expand or develop some idea in the lead
- should not drop into a chronological narrative

Attribution and direct quotes

- All major information should be attributed unless it is commonly known or unless the information itself strongly implies the source.
- Don't dump a string of direct quotations on the reader.
- Direct quotations should be no more than two sentences long.
- Direct quotations and their attribution should be punctuated properly. Here's an example:
"John did not go with her," he said.
- Elements of a direct quotation should be in the proper sequence, as in the example above: direct quote, speaker, verb.

AP style

- Always.
- Check numbers, dates, locations, titles, etc.

Check the following

- pronoun-antecedent agreement
- it, its, it's
- "it is . . .", "there is . . .", "there are . . ." structures; avoid these. They are passive and vague.
- Use the past tense, not the present.
- Comma splice or run-on sentence, such as:
He picked up the ball, he ran down the field.
Sally does not know where he is he is not here.
These are grammatically incorrect.

Plurals -- don't make them with an "apostrophe s".

Short paragraphs -- any paragraph more than three sentences is definitely too long; any paragraph that is three sentences is probably too long.

Wordiness -- have you checked for too much verbiage, redundancies, unnecessary repetitions, etc.?

Name, title -- When you put the title before a name, do not separate them with commas, such as:
(WRONG): *Game warden, Brad Fisher, arrested the trespassers.*

When the name comes before the title, the title should be set off by commas:

Brad Fisher, the game warden, arrested the trespassers.

Transitions -- use them to tie your paragraphs together. Don't jump from one subject to another in a new paragraph without giving the reader some warning.

Names -- check them once more to make sure they are spelled correctly.

Don't copy the wording of the information sheet.

I have checked my midterm for all of these items.
