**HOW TO WRITE A NEWS STORY**

**STEP ONE: The intro**Write a short sentence to grab the attention of your reader. Summarise what happened. Ask yourself: what’s exciting, interesting or unusual about this story?
So you would write: *Fighting broke out between councillors last night. Punches were thrown when the mayor announced a council tax increase*.
You wouldn’t start: *At a meeting of Clapham council on Thursday April 1.*

**STEP TWO: The detail**Make sure your readers have basic information: Who? What? Why? Where? When?

**STEP THREE: The quote**Focus on people when you tell your story. Quotes will bring it to life! Use them to express strong feelings [Brian said: “I was so scared my knees turned to jelly”} or opinion [*Doris said: “The person who did this should be sacked.”]*

**STEP FOUR: Narrative and action**Make sure events in your story happen in the right order and finish off with information your readers might need [*For tickets, phone 010 12345*.]

**OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER**

**SOURCES**Where did you get your information? Readers will know your information is reliable if you say where it came from [*According to a report published by the Principal of Lambeth College this week..*.]

**BE OBJECTIVE**Avoid giving your opinion – no-one cares what journalists think! If you want to show people’s strong feelings or views, use quotes so they can speak for themselves.

**KEEP IT SIMPLE**We all know people who are easy to talk to in real life, but when they answer the phone they suddenly start talking like a robot: *[“May I ask who is speaking?. And what is your call regarding?*]
Don’t write like this! Use simple language and short, clear sentences. Keep the paragraphs short, too.

**DON’T STEAL**Journalists get sacked when they copy other people’s stories (or when they make stuff up). Get your own information. If it’s second hand, say so [*According to today’s New York Times, Donald Trump intends to bomb Bristol* not *Donald Trump said: “I intend to…*”]

**KEEP IT SHORT**When you’ve finished, read your story carefully and run it through Spellcheck. Ask yourself: have I repeated anything? Have I put in stuff that’s dull or pointless?
Make sure your story is packed with interest and sticks to one of the competition’s four big themes (don’t forget to read the brief!).

**GOOD LUCK – ENJOY YOUR STORY!**

*RM*