

J202

Culver

Tip Sheet: Story Types

Week 1

In J202, you'll be asked to complete many assignments, covering a range of communications challenges. However, the assignments in the course boil down to 10 basic story types. As you're working on an assignment, you can turn to this packet for tips and samples. Do not look at these as templates, leaving you to simply insert new information. Instead, look at them as working guides. They'll give you a reference point from which to start. Also, remember your texts offer further guidance and will be helpful as you write pieces.

10 story types:

1. print/online hard news
2. print/online feature
3. print/online interpretive
4. broadcast hard news
5. press release
6. newsletter story
7. strategy memo/executive summary
8. direct mail letter
9. print ad/direct mail flier
10. critique

Below you'll find principal characteristics and a working example for each story type. These all fall under the broad umbrella topic of "auto safety." In J202, we tend to deal with different stories addressing the same broad topic to illustrate how different audiences and different goals change a storytelling approach. With the exception of the executive summary, each of the working examples is drawn from a real piece of communication. Strategy memos and executive summaries are harder to acquire as examples because they tend to be internal documents.

As you read these characteristics and examples, remember that they are not exhaustive, not a "magic bullet" for doing your work in this course. No tip sheet can replace the important work of participating in lectures, reading the texts, scouring the media for insight and, most importantly, **thinking** about your story and how you tell it.

1. Print/Online Hard News

This story type is commonly used for the most current stories in newspapers, online news sites and, sometimes, shorter magazine stories.

Principal Characteristics

- thorough information gathering
- sorting of information to glean the most important
- summary lead (goal of 30 words)
- inverted pyramid structure
- strong, clear, concise language in past tense
- tight transitions
- short sentences and paragraphs
- illustrative quotes

Sample

Audience: Readers of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

Goal: Inform audience about accident

Cedar Grove — A fiery accident involving 38 vehicles on a stretch of highway smothered with morning fog left 10 dead and dozens injured Friday in the deadliest pileup in state history.

A separate accident, which happened around the same time on a nearby road, left one teen dead and a second in critical condition after their car struck a semitrailer truck. The two were headed to Cedar Grove High School.

Crews worked to clear I-43 of wreckage — identifying bodies and vehicles amid the tangled metal — into the night. The accident took place in Sheboygan County, just north of the Ozaukee County line, about 35 miles north of Milwaukee.

Authorities believe the accident, which was reported at 7:19 a.m., happened as cars in the southbound lanes began to strike each other as some slowed down in a dense fog.

As vehicles tried to get off the highway, more cars and trucks became involved, leading to a chain reaction — some witnesses reported hearing a horrific “bang, bang, bang” — that left a scene of carnage. An inferno raged, fueled by diesel fuel and a semitrailer truck loaded with paper products.

Witnesses said cars may have plunged into the pileup for up to five minutes.

“They were dealing with zero visibility,” said State Patrol Sgt. John Jones. “Witnesses said cars just kept driving into the fog at a high rate of speed.”

“In my 21 years, this is the most horrific scene I have ever seen,” said Sheboygan County Sheriff Loni Koenig.

Officials said four other accidents occurred at nearby points of the highway, in both northbound and southbound lanes, including one in which a car rear-ended a semitrailer truck, ending up underneath it. All involved in those accidents survived.

Northbound lanes of I-43 were reopened Friday evening. Southbound lanes were expected to be open by this morning, assuming the damaged roadway could be repaired.

As night fell, floodlights were put in place so workers could continue removing the wreckage, even as traffic streamed along in the reopened northbound lanes. Firetrucks also were put in position, their headlights shining on the area.

Workers stood holding brightly colored tarps as others worked to remove the bodies, which were carried from the scene in numbered body bags. All the bodies were removed by 7:15 p.m.

Workers continued to remove mangled cars and trucks late into the night. One of the last vehicles left was a dump truck, its rear tires melted onto the roadway.

Dozens of gawkers — adults, high school students and even a couple with a small child — had parked along a side road and hiked a ways to watch the workers.

Trying to sort it out

Authorities were still trying to sort out the sequence of events late Friday, with seven to eight accident investigators on the scene for a tricky reconstruction effort that may resemble those after plane crashes.

Officials say they may have to use DNA to identify some of the victims, because bodies were burned severely in the fires and explosions. All of the victims died in their cars. One vehicle had two occupants, and the rest of those killed were sole occupants of their vehicles, said Jones of the State Patrol.

No children were among the victims, he added.

The names of the victims were not released because authorities were in the process Friday night of notifying the families of those killed.

Of the 36 injured, seven were in critical condition and one in serious condition at area hospitals. Some 28, whom officials referred to as the “walking wounded,” were treated and released. Injuries ranged from burns to broken bones.

Groups of families, worried when loved ones did not make it home or to work as expected, began arriving early at the site, where firefighters were hosing down the wreckage and blue tarps were placed over vehicles in which bodies had been found. The tarps presented a startling contrast to the smoldering black and gray of the scene.

“I don’t know how we got out of the car,” said Patrick Parise, 24, of Green Bay, who was treated at Sheboygan Memorial Hospital.

He was traveling with his girlfriend, April Busse, also 24, and his little sister, Daniele Borchert, 8. The trio were on their way to Germantown to pick up Parise’s other sister, Tara Tsay, 21, for a trip to Fort Lauderdale, Fla., for their grandfather’s 80th birthday.

“April was driving the car, and I was sitting on the passenger side sleeping,” Parise said. “Just before the accident, I heard April scream, ‘Oh my God.’ “

"I think we hit the pile, but I don't really know," he said. "I don't know how Daniele got out of the car, or how April got out. All I know is all of a sudden we were walking up the hill on the side of the freeway and there were all kinds of emergency medical people around us."

Deadliest accident

The accident was the deadliest in state history.

In March 1999, a van carrying a magazine sales crew overturned on I-90 near Janesville, killing seven. In February 1997, eight businessmen on an annual fishing trip were killed when their van was struck by a semitrailer truck on Highway 41 north of Slinger.

In 1937 in Manitowoc County, according to state records, nine people were killed when a family headed to Door County for a Memorial Day vacation collided with a car carrying three local men along what is now I-43. Only a small child survived the crash.

Heavy fog was identified as the main cause of Friday's accident, along with vehicles traveling too fast for conditions.

"It was a complete whiteout," said Larry Freitag, a truck driver for Piggly Wiggly who saw the accident unfold in front of him.

Freitag said he saw the boom of a Cablevision truck flip into the air. He later saw the burned wreckage of that truck. Another truck, a vehicle from Short Transportation, was burning when Freitag tried to rescue the driver. He couldn't get close.

"Flames shot out and I had to back off," he said. He never saw anyone emerge from the truck, he said.

Nathan Huenink, 22, of Sheboygan Falls said he was heading south on I-43 on a motorcycle. "You couldn't see 15 feet in front of you. All of a sudden, the car in front of me, the brake lights went on and I screeched to a stop."

Huenink, whose birthday was Friday, said he darted around the car in front of him, only to hear another car slam into that one. "I could have been squished," he said, "It all happened in a split second."

"I pulled in front of a big truck because I knew that one wouldn't move if it got hit. I just hid out."

Huenink said he then heard a series of explosions. "There was just this black smoke billowing and billowing. . . . You felt almost like you were dreaming, that it couldn't be real. And you could hear cars screeching in behind you."

Seth Schwochert, a driver for Sheboygan Beverage, said he passed people standing by the highway — a big mistake, he thought. Other drivers, though, said people waving caused them to slow down.

Schwochert said he saw the fire from the crash first, and heard "bang, bang, bang," presumably more cars adding to the pile of twisted metal. At the same time, there were more crashes behind him and

The accident occurred at an otherwise unremarkable point of the highway, near mile marker 113, a spot passed each day by some 24,000 vehicles. On I-43 between Milwaukee and Green Bay, the point near Cedar Grove is where the highway passes closest to Lake Michigan, which can contribute to foggy conditions.

As dozens of emergency workers — sheriff's deputies, state troopers, firefighters, ambulance crews — raced to the scene, officials closed an eight-mile stretch of I-43, from Highway 32 on the south to County Road D on the north.

And when the fog lifted and the TV helicopters finally brought the scene into focus, it was unlike many other chain-reaction pileups, in which a series of cars ends up angled domino-like across lanes and in ditches.

Instead, it appeared more like a bomb had exploded amid the farms and fields. Or as if the cars and trucks had been dropped from the sky, one on top of the next, with a horrible twist of blackened metal in the center and intact cars and trucks splayed across the highway at the edges.

There were some skid marks on the pavement, along with personal belongings — bags, empty soda bottles, a shoe. Some of the nearby grass had been charred.

The scene indicated that drivers had little, if any, warning that there were problems ahead, no sign of the fire and smoke inside the fog.

"I could see a little beyond this," said Jim Lawson, a truck driver with Jelco Transportation in Manhattan, Ill., patting the hood ornament on his truck.

As word of the accident spread, nearby farmers and residents walked across fields of corn and alfalfa to get a glimpse of the scene, many leaning against a barbed-wire fence.

Even after the smoke dissipated, its smell lingered in the crisp fall air, an acrid odor with a tinge of chemicals.

Rows of firetrucks, ambulances and emergency vehicles lined the sides of the highway's northbound lanes, where some vehicles had been involved in separate accidents. Once the highway was shut down, emergency vehicles — including some from Saukville, Newburg, Random Lake and other towns — drove in from the opposite direction.

Worried family members

Some worried family members, searching for relatives, climbed a hill overlooking the freeway to survey the tangled mass of vehicles some 200 yards away.

Garwood Staggs of Sheboygan came looking for his cousin, Laurie Sorrel, 32, of Cairo, Ill., who was visiting relatives and left for home from Sheboygan, about 19 miles north of the crash site, at 7 a.m. Friday.

"I'm hoping she made it through before the accident," he said, his voice choked with emotion. "She doesn't have a cell phone. I don't know. I can't find her."

Others ventured closer, to within 40 feet of the main accident site, an exceedingly grim scene.

Area hospitals were flooded with calls from people checking to see if loved ones were on their injured list.

"Can you slow down and spell out the name?" asked Inga Von Appen, at the reception desk of the emergency room at Columbia St. Mary's Hospital, Ozaukee Campus, in Mequon.

By 11:20 a.m., when that call came in, she had already called to get a faxed list of patients at the other hospitals.

"I'm not understanding you," said Von Appen, reviewing the lists. "No, he is not at our hospital and he is not at Saint Nick's or Sheboygan Memorial."

Priests and pastors had already begun to mill about the waiting area, talking with families and victims, offering counseling and consolation.

Pastor Will Reichmann took a walk early Friday morning, a day he hadn't planned to work, and after seeing the news on television went to the hospital.

He spoke with two teenagers who survived the crash, who soon also were being comforted by their families.

"Some are still in a state of shock," said Reichmann, pastor of care and counseling at First Immanuel Lutheran Church in Cedarburg. "They find themselves not only traumatized by the accident but the trauma around them."

"For all of us, I think it makes us think not only of being careful but also to be ready, in case of an accident, to be ready to meet the Lord," said the Rev. Earl Slotman, pastor of Faith Reformed Church of Cedar Grove, who came to the scene looking for parishioners needing help.

2. Print/Online Feature

This story type is commonly used in newspapers, magazines and online news sites to tell deeper, richer stories that go beyond breaking news.

Principal Characteristics

- thorough information gathering
- sorting of information to glean the most illustrative
- feature lead
- narrative structure
- strong, clear language
- vivid, visual writing
- effective transitions
- sentences and paragraphs varied in length
- illustrative quotes
- present tense

Sample

Audience: Readers of Sports Illustrated

Goal: Tell the follow-up story to a car accident that injured an NBA player

The floor of Arco Arena is bare, and the building is quiet, save for the swish of brooms that workmen are using to clean the concrete aisles. Brilliant sunlight streams through the open doors at one end of the arena, and from beneath the basket at the far end of the floor, one can actually look out across empty parking lots, over sheep pastures, clear to the modest skyline of downtown Sacramento, five miles to the south.

Suddenly the silence is cut by the squeak of sneakers grabbing wood, a basketball bouncing and the abrupt, unsympathetic voice of Al Biancani, strength and conditioning coach of the Sacramento Kings: "Come on, Bob-oh, come on, you dog, come on, man...." From foul line to basket, Bobby Hurley retrieves and scores, retrieves and scores, his

breathing becoming heavier with every layup, his skin turning deeper shades of red with every sprint back to the free throw line to pick up a ball Biancani has placed there.

Nearly five months have passed since the automobile accident that should have killed Hurley but instead left him limp and broken, with seemingly no future in his sport. Hurley, bent at the waist and clutching the hem of his baggy shorts in the universal sign of basketball exhaustion, says to Biancani, "Can I shoot some jumpers now?" Hurley looks familiar, recognizably the same six-foot waif who helped Duke win two NCAA championships and then signed a six-year, \$16.2 million contract after the Kings picked him No. 7 in the 1993 NBA draft.

But the 22-year-old Hurley looks different, too—thinner (though at 160 pounds, he has gained back all but five of the 25 pounds he lost after the accident) and more frail. There are also thick purple scars crossing his back and torso, and another running from his left eye to the tip of his left ear. These are reminders that the simple question "Can I shoot some jumpers now?" is evidence of a small miracle. Before this day is finished, Hurley will drill for 75 hard minutes under Biancani, a man given to the politically incorrect practice of telling malingerers that they are wearing "pink panties." Hurley will run on the court, he will lift weights, and he will lie on the floor of the Kings' locker room, flushed and hollow-cheeked after more than 500 sit-ups. Panting, he will say, "I'm finished...cooked... done."

Yet the day will be a triumph, because, as Biancani says, "from where he was to where he is now is truly unbelievable." Where he is now is another day closer to a comeback that once seemed impossible and now is likely.

"I'm totally committed to playing," Hurley says, setting his sights on the Kings' preseason training camp, still more than four months off. "I realized by having the time off that I'm happiest when I'm playing basketball. I've found other things I like to do, but I miss it. I miss the life out there. It's going to be rough, you saw me struggling out there. But from this point, it's only going to get better."

On the night of Sunday, Dec. 12, Hurley played 19 minutes, failed to score and handed out seven assists in a 112-102 King loss to the Los Angeles Clippers at ARCO. It was a poor performance but not atypical in a difficult rookie season during which Hurley, seen by some basketball observers as potentially the next incarnation of Utah Jazz play-making star John Stockton, averaged 7.1 points and 6.1 assists in 20 games. Shortly before 9 p.m., Hurley drove from the players' parking lot in his 1993 Toyota 4Runner. Moments later, making a left turn at a rural intersection, he was struck broadside on the driver's side by a '70 Buick station wagon loaded with paint cans. According to police, the wagon, driven by Dan Wieland, a 37-year-old house painter, was traveling from Hurley's left at or near the 55-mph speed limit with its headlights off. Wieland will stand trial on June 13 on misdemeanor charges of reckless driving, causing injury and driving without a valid license.

The impact threw Hurley's Toyota 127 feet and onto its right side. Hurley, who was not wearing a seat belt, was thrown from the vehicle and landed in an irrigation ditch. His sneakers were ripped from his feet and lay on the pavement. Hurley remembers little of that night: leaving the arena, making the left turn, briefly seeing the other vehicle before it struck his...and then sitting in the ditch. "I thought I was paralyzed, because of how bad my back hurt," he says.

Much took place that evening that serendipitously enhanced Hurley's chances of survival, including swift action by several other drivers who stopped to assist him. One such motorist, Mike Batham, found Hurley facedown in 18 inches of cold water and pulled him to a sitting position. "My first thought," says Batham, a 46-year-old engineer from Yuba City, Calif., "was that he was going to drown if I didn't do something."

Hurley's teammate and fellow rookie, forward Mike Peplowski, had left the arena a few minutes after Hurley and was the third person on the scene of the accident. Peplowski wrapped Hurley against the 40deg chill in a hunting jacket from his truck and after emergency personnel arrived, helped them carry him from the ditch. Three months later, while they played golf together in Sacramento, Hurley and Peplowski would discuss what happened that night, a needed catharsis for both of them. Peplowski told Hurley how Hurley had kept asking, "Am I going to die?" and how the one sensation Peplowski couldn't shake from that night is that Hurley's breath bore a horrible stench. "It smelled like the deer I gutted last fall, and that's when I knew something was seriously wrong, that Bob probably had internal injuries," Peplowski says.

Hurley's injuries went far beyond what even his scars would seem to indicate: two collapsed lungs, five broken left ribs, left shoulder blade fractured in small pieces like an eggshell, torn anterior cruciate ligament in the right knee, compression fracture in the lower back, multiple deep lacerations, broken right fibula, badly sprained left wrist and dozens of deep bruises. Most serious of all, the windpipe stem leading from Hurley's trachea to his left lung was torn free from the lung, an injury that results in death in more than 90% of such cases. But at the University of California-Davis Medical Center, Hurley experienced another piece of good fortune: He was treated first by Dr. Russell Sawyer; the hospital's 33-year-old chief surgical resident. Coincidentally, Sawyer had just completed writing a book chapter on

tracheal and bronchial injury. Sawyer was the one who diagnosed the torn windpipe stem, an injury often missed in emergency treatment.

It would take eight hours of delicate surgery to reattach the windpipe. "When you tear the lung off completely, that is almost completely incompatible with life," says William Blaisdell, the trauma surgeon who coordinated Hurley's treatment that night at the medical center. "He would represent the most massive injury I've seen that lived." Blaisdell's mere presence in the operating room represented yet another stroke of luck. The surgeon, who 28 years ago in San Francisco helped pioneer the study of trauma as a medical discipline, had arrived home in Sacramento from Washington, D.C., almost exactly at the moment the crash took place. "As we're landing at the airport, my wife looked down at the ground and saw the accident," Blaisdell says.

Perversely, the severity of Hurley's injuries helped prolong his life. "When somebody with this type of injury takes in air through his mouth, it leaks into his chest cavity and builds up pressure, which won't allow him to breathe and won't allow his heart to fill with blood," says Sawyer. "That's how the person usually dies. Bobby had so many rib fractures on his left side that the air was able to leak out of the chest cavity and throughout his body." The air bloated Hurley badly, creating what in emergency rooms is darkly called the Michelin Man Effect.

The gravity of the situation was not immediately known by Bobby's parents: his father, Bob Sr., the coach at St. Anthony in Jersey City, N.J., the high school basketball powerhouse where Bobby played before going to Duke, and his mother, Chris. Barely an hour after watching the King game via the satellite dish in their house in Jersey City, the Hurleys received a phone call from Bobby's then girlfriend in Sacramento. She told them what she had heard from Peplowski: only that Bobby had been in some sort of accident.

"We never, ever thought it was anything other than a fender bender," Chris says. Richard Marder, the Kings' team physician, called shortly thereafter to tell them that the injuries were serious but that it looked as if Bobby would live. The Hurleys caught a 5:30 a.m. flight to Sacramento. By late that Monday night their son was able to respond by squeezing their hands and nodding his head. Still, the parents were shocked by what they saw. "So bloated, so puffy," recalls Bob. "We just couldn't recognize him."

Bobby's brother, Danny, younger by 18 months, and his 13-year-old sister, Melissa, arrived from New Jersey on Wednesday. At the time, Danny, a junior guard at Seton Hall, was trying to deal with a trauma of his own. Five days earlier he had left his team, only three games into the season. Danny's decision was the culmination of more than two years of emotional anguish as he sought to live up to the reputation of his brother, who is also his best friend. "Either would walk through fire for the other," says Ricky Lasch, a boyhood friend of the Hurleys'.

Danny quit the Pirates six days after a 72-64 loss to St. John's in a night game at Madison Square Garden, during which he missed all six of his field goal attempts. Sacramento had faced the New York Knicks at the Garden that afternoon, and Bobby had attended the college game with his parents. "I felt that they were viewing a failure on the court, that their son was a failure," Danny says.

After the game, feeling uncertain of his place in the Seton Hall locker room, Bobby chose not to go there to comfort the distraught Danny. It is a decision he regrets. "As a friend and a brother, I should have gone to see him," says Bobby. "I know that no matter what kind of game I played, Danny would come in after and talk to me." Bobby did meet Danny later that night at a Greenwich Village restaurant. Danny told him he was quitting the team, and Bobby supported his decision.

Now, as he arrived at Bobby's hospital room, the younger Hurley was the one who felt a brotherly burden. "I couldn't believe how much pain he was in and how terrible he looked," Danny says. "Here I was, still feeling terrible about my own self. I thought, 'Why couldn't this happen to me, instead of somebody who's got such a bright future?' Just seeing him in that bed, I said, 'You don't deserve to be there. I'm the loser.'"

In the two weeks that followed, while Bobby learned again how to rise and sit, how to open his swollen eyes and how to take short walks in the corridor, it was as if the brothers were back in their basement room in the family's row house in Jersey City. They watched movies together on TV. They planned golf outings for the spring and taunted each other over who would win. "To know that he came out there, I'll always remember that," says Bobby. "I know that he would do anything for me. And I feel the same way for Danny."

Bobby still cringes when he recalls the agony of those first two weeks. People would visit him and be greeted with "I'm messed up, man. I'm messed up bad." He was on morphine for 10 days and almost wore out the call button asking for more. But also: "I remember in the hospital, the doctor asking me to wiggle my toes, and I could do that," says Hurley. "I knew I'd be able to walk again."

The rehabilitation process was draining. Six weeks after the accident, having returned to New Jersey, Hurley began going to a health club in Bayonne. The act of walking across the gym to a treadmill winded him. His first attempt at

sustained exercise was to walk a mile in 10 minutes, which was embarrassing. “That frustrated me because I’ve always been in such great shape,” Hurley says. “When I got to the Kings’ training camp, I was in the best shape of my life.”

By early March, Hurley was running. In April he began playing games of one-on-one with his personal trainer, Mike Hurley (no relation), using a nine-foot basket. “Nobody should ever underestimate that kid’s heart or his determination,” says King coach Gary St. Jean. “I’m just happy he’s alive, but for his sake, I hope he comes all the way back.”

It was an unexpected bonus that the torn ligament in Hurley’s knee didn’t require surgery. “He has a complete tear, but without the instability you would expect,” says Marder. “The joint behaves as if it’s a partial tear.” The injury to the left shoulder is more troublesome.

“I still have a hard time doing things going to my left,” Hurley says. “It’ll come.”

Marder agrees. “He’s well ahead of where I would have expected him to be,” he says. “It’s very realistic to think that he’ll be playing basketball again.”

The emotional recovery has been difficult, too. Flashbacks to the accident seemingly as real and terrifying as the crash itself, have been unnerving. Hurley will be sitting on a couch or, worse, driving a car, when something will trigger the memory of the crash. “I’ll hear a car horn or I’ll be looking at my scars, and I’ll think about the accident, and my body will just start shaking, almost like I’m reliving it,” Hurley says. “A couple of times I actually did relive it, and I was really shook for a while.”

At one point Hurley consulted a sports psychologist, who helped him devise ways to shake loose from the flashbacks. “If I’m sitting alone and feel one coming on, I turn on the TV set, things like that,” Hurley says. “I’m coming to grips with it, not letting it overpower me. I feel like I’m normal now.”

Hurley plans to spend most of this summer at the five-bedroom house he bought for his family on the Jersey shore. He is having a gym installed in the garage. He recently bought a \$100,000 Mercedes 500SL because, he says, “after the accident I promised I’d treat myself to a nice new car. Plus, if I get in another accident, this is a pretty good car to be sitting in.”

Danny, too, is mending. He has undergone counseling and is working out. “He’s a different kid,” says Seton Hall trainer John Levitt, one of his closest friends. “What happened to Bobby was the turning point in his life.” Like his brother, Danny plans to return to his team, though with a lesser emotional investment. “Just to try to enjoy myself he says. “Not to take the burden.”

Bobby says, “Danny and I know how fragile things can be. Our family has learned not to base your happiness on whether the ball goes through the hoop.”

And, incidentally, the ball has been going through the hoop lately. Early last week Bobby played his first full-court game since Dec. 12. Sure, it was only against high school and college kids at White Eagle Hall, a refurbished bingo joint in Jersey City. But he felt fast and quick, almost like before. And he made two NBA-length three-pointers. “I only made two all last year,” Hurley says, referring to his sadly abbreviated NBA rookie season. “So already I’m even.”

Ahead, actually. Way ahead.

3. Print/Online Interpretive (also known as Opinion Writing or Column Writing)

Writers use this story type when writing analysis or opinion pieces for newspapers, magazines or online news sites.

Principal Characteristics

- thorough information gathering
- sorting of information to glean the most interesting and persuasive
- defining of writer’s opinion or conclusion
- consideration of evidence in support of and opposition to that conclusion
- feature lead
- narrative structure
- strong, clear language
- effective transitions
- short sentences and paragraphs
- quotes but less reliance on them than other print/online news types
- often a more personal, conversational tone
- present or past tense

Sample

Audience: Readers of Newsday

Goal: Inform and entertain readers

So there we were in Brentwood, my 19-year-old daughter and I, the 10th car in line for that rite of teenage passage, the driver's license road test. One in five applicants fails the test, the state Motor Vehicle Department says, so one or two of the waiting applicants likely was going to return home unhappy. Not Liz, we hoped.

Since this was her second try, Liz knew what to expect. And since she had grown confident with practicing parallel parking and three-point turns, we were relaxed enough to tune in to the mini-dramas involving the nine tense applicants ahead of us. What comedy! What tragedy! What passion! If you think about it, the earning of a driver's license has become a more meaningful passage to adulthood than high school graduation. To get just about any kind of decent job, you really need college credentials. But with a driver's license, you can hit the road, redirect your life and display a legal ID. Without it, you can barely get yourself to the mall.

And the license is becoming harder and harder for a young person to obtain. Gov. George Pataki just signed a law setting a graduated procedure for teen licensure, effective next September. It means that when my 15-year-old Becky seeks a driver's license, she will have to have six months of road experience after getting her learner's permit before she can take the road test.

The feds are weighing in, too. On Wednesday, the National Transportation Safety Board recommended that when a licensed teen is at the wheel, only one other youth be allowed in the car. States don't have to take Uncle Sam's advice, but it is instructive to know that the 6.8 percent of drivers who are under 20 were involved in 14 percent of the fatal crashes in 2000.

So the stakes were high for all 10 of the license-coveters waiting in line in Brentwood. If the Motor Vehicle Department would allow it, the venue, in an industrial area of southern Suffolk, would make a terrific classroom for drama students. The teacher could point out the classic dramatis personae. There is the brooding heavy: a grim-faced man with a clipboard who comes to each car to check paperwork with a snarl. There are the hard-eyed judges: the examiners who slide into the passenger seats and

ride with the applicants, barely containing their alarm at the prospect. There are the sacrificial innocents: applicants, young and old, for whom the license is more than certification of the right to drive, but to live in suburbia as a fully functioning adult.

We watched one matronly woman turn over the wheel to a middle-aged applicant who appeared to be her son. The license examiner got on board and the son roared out of sight. About seven minutes later, the car returned. The examiner practically sputtered out of the car, and the driver emerged, his head hanging. His mother took the wheel again, and they slowly pulled away. The drama teacher could point out to the students how his body language said it all: "Abject failure."

We watched a young couple do the same gavotte. The wife was the hopeful, and she pulled carefully away from the curb, her turn signal blinking. Hubby paced for seven minutes, and then the car returned. The wife bounded out and threw herself in her husband's arms. Her body language said, "Total victory!"

We also watched the license examiners. Of the four we saw in action, not one looked even remotely relaxed. If 20 percent of applicants fail, that means an examiner must face heart-stopping terror at least several times a day. Liz and I crossed our fingers, hoping the examiner who rode with the middle-aged son - by the look on the examiner's face, in the Car of Death - wouldn't be Liz's.

Finally, it was Liz's turn. A different examiner climbed in. I waited on the sidewalk as Liz pulled away from the curb, her turn signal blinking. Another mom was there, waiting for her high-school-aged son.

When he pulled up, another drama lesson played out. The examiner fiddled with a palm-sized computer and handed the boy a piece of paper that looked like a grocery receipt. His mother and I must have been the picture of tense expectation as he read and reread the scrap of paper. Finally, he looked up white-faced, said, "I passed," and inhaled with relief. His mom beamed. I beamed. We all shook hands and examined the little paper, which enumerated the minor things he had done wrong and said his license

would arrive soon by mail.

Then Liz pulled up and we all watched as the examiner handed her a similar scrap of paper. Liz read and reread it. "I passed!" she squeaked, and popped out of the car for a hug. Total victory - and one giant step into adulthood.

4. Broadcast Hard News

This story type is used for the most current stories in television and radio news broadcasts.

Principal Characteristics

- thorough information gathering
- sorting of information to glean the most important
- summary lead (goal of 20 syllables)
- blend of inverted pyramid and narrative structure with both most important information first and beginning-middle-end (often in the form of introduction, soundbite, bridge, soundbite, conclusion)
- strong, clear, concise language
- short sentences and paragraphs
- effective soundbites (video for television, audio for radio)
- illustrative background (video “b-roll” for television, ambient sound for radio)
- conversational tone
- present tense

Sample

Audience: Viewers of the WISC-TV 10 p.m. news

Goal: Inform viewers about the dangers of drunk driving

(Television news script – the items in brackets are specifications for the technical crew, the words in all caps are spoken by the anchor or reporter and the words in lowercase are captions for the crew. In J202, you can omit the technical specifications and the upper- and lowercase forms. We ask only that you give us the reporter’s words, the soundbites and an idea of the accompanying visuals or audio.)

[1DRUNK]

[WRITER=rwo]

[TALENT=COREY](**Corey**)

[ESS=]

WISCONSIN IS ON TRACK FOR ONE OF THE DEADLIEST YEARS ON ITS ROADWAYS.

AND OFFICIALS ARE NERVOUS BECAUSE THEY'RE STILL FACING NEW YEAR'S EVE.

[DOUBLE BOX](**Double Box**)

NEW 3'S REBEKAH WOOD JOINS US WITH HOW THEY'RE ARE TRYING TO STOP A DEADLY TREND.

[TOTAL=00:12]

[12/29/2002][20:20:47][2DRUNK]

[WRITER=rwo]

[TALENT=REBEKAH](**Rebekah**)

[ESS=]

[SUPER=#346]

EARLIER THIS MONTH A 6 YEAR OLD WAUNAKEE BOY WAS KILLED BY AN ALLEGED DRUNK DRIVER...AN ACCIDENT THAT TOUCHED THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY.

WITH NEW YEAR'S EVE JUST A FEW DAYS AWAY, OFFICIALS HOPE WE CAN LEARN FROM THE TRAGEDY.

[TAKE PKG](**PKG**)

[TAPE FILE#1486][START TIME CODE=28:38]

[SUPER=3-DAWN HAAS/Devin Lehman O'Neal's Grandmother/Lost Devin in Alleged Drunk Driving Crash]

[SUPER=3-DEPUTY TIM ELVE/Dane County Sheriff's Dept./Asking People to Celebrate Smart]

[SUPER=3-MIC RUSCH/Metro Transit/Marketing Specialist]

[OUTQ=WE'RE GOING THROUGH]

[RUNS=:]

[TOTAL=00:13]

[12/29/2002][20:30:33][P-DRUNK]

[EDL=3E1016E2; PROFILE1]

[TALENT=REBEKAH](**Rebekah**)

[WRITER=rwo]

(sotfull)[SOTFULL@46:01 ON FILE TAPE 1484]

(///dawn haas/Devin Lehman O'Neal's Paternal Grandmother

///"you go to the hospital and you see your baby lying there like that, it's just, it's not fair. she sighs and puts her head in her hands."))

[RUNS=:10]

[DISC/VO]

DAWN HAAS LEARNED HOW QUICKLY DRINKING AND DRIVING CAN CHANGE YOUR LIFE.

A DRUNK DRIVER HIT THE CAR HER 6 YEAR OLD GRANDSON WAS RIDING IN...HE DIED.

ONE OF 775 PEOPLE KILLED ON WISCONSIN ROADS THIS YEAR...AND ONE OF THE MOST DANGEROUS NIGHTS OF THE YEAR IS STILL TO COME.

(sotfull)[SOTFULL @ 3:25 ON AWA 11]

(///Deputy Tim Elve///"new year's eve can be extremely dangerous time, because a lot of people are drinking and driving."))

[RUNS=:05]

[DISC/VO]

DEPUTY TIM ELVE SAYS DRUNK DRIVING CAUSES A SORT OF VICTIM RIPPLE EFFECT.

(sotfull)[SOTFULL@4:55]

(///Deputy Elve ///"it can bring severe tragedies to both families, not just the victim's family, but the drunk drivers family. because both of them are going to get torn apart in different ways obviously."))

[RUNS=:12]

[DISC/VO]

THAT'S WHY HE SUGGESTS KEEPING YOUR DRINKS TO A MINIMUM, HAVING DESIGNATED DRIVERS, OR TAKING ADVANTAGE OF CITY SERVICES.

(sotfull)[SOTFULL@:53 AWA-32]

(///Mic Rusch/Metro Transit///" starting at 5 o'clock on tuesday we're offering free rides on all metro routes and that's about 18 routes we offer that free service until about 3:30 in the morning."))

[RUNS=:10]

(sotfull)[SOTFULL@2:59]

(///Mic Rusch ///"we just think it's a good thing to offer extended service into the evening to keep everything safe and have a good start to the new year."))

[RUNS=:06]

[DISC/VO]

AND TO STOP A DRUNK DRIVER BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE.

(sotfull)[SOTFULL@46:11 ON FILE TAPE 1484]

(///Dawn Haas///" just please wear your seatbelt and don't drink and drive. you'll never know what a family goes through until it hits you and i hope nobody has to go through what we're going through. ")

[RUNS=:13]

[EDITOR=]

[*TRT=]

5. Press Release (also known as News Release)

This story type is used by individuals or organizations to announce information as part of strategy to manage opinion and image.

Principal Characteristics

- development of a strategy
- thorough information gathering
- sorting of information to glean the most important, persuasive and productive for the strategy
- summary lead (goal of 30 words)
- inverted pyramid structure
- benefit statement
- description of the individual, organization or product

- ways for readers to act (often)
- quotes generated by the writer
- strong, clear, concise language
- tight transitions
- short sentences and paragraphs
- present or past tense

Sample

Audience: News media, civic groups, opinion leaders (such as legislators)

Goal: Persuade audience to give attention, mainly news coverage, to the Give Death a Holiday campaign

November 6, 2000 #551

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:

John Evans, 608/266-3048
john.evans@dot.state.wi.us
Joan Fernan, 608/266-1972
joan.fernan@dot.state.wi.us

State announces “Give Death a Holiday” campaign to reduce traffic fatalities

A population equal to that of the villages of Friendship or Rio would be wiped out if traffic fatalities on Wisconsin highways continue at their current pace, state officials said Monday.

“More than 800 persons could be killed on state highways by the end of this year if our crashes continue at the current rate,” Wisconsin Department of Transportation Secretary Terry Mulcahy said. He and other traffic safety officials kicked off an emergency holiday safety campaign: “Give death a holiday – Buckle up, slow down, drive sober,” which is designed to stem the biggest highway death toll since 1989.

“The sad fact remains that most traffic crashes are caused by someone who wasn’t paying attention to what they were doing while behind the wheel,” Mulcahy said. “Driving is a serious business. More than 800 funerals in Wisconsin this year is intolerable and unnecessary. It’s time to revive our good driving habits and ‘Give death a holiday.’”

Mulcahy said the department has been watching the rising trend and raised red flags throughout the summer.

“We’ve encouraged people to pay attention to their driving habits. Many have done so. Too many have not.” He added that of the people killed in traffic crashes earlier this year, more than 65 percent were not wearing their safety belts.

“Speed also has been listed as a primary factor in some 30 percent of all fatal crashes this year, compared to 25 percent last year,” Mulcahy said. “Our pavement sensors are showing that traffic speeds are gradually creeping higher and higher. On virtually every highway type, some 70 percent of all motorists are exceeding the posted speed limit. Some 8 to 15 percent are exceeding it by 10 miles per hour or more.”

Alcohol continues to be an issue, as some 38 percent of traffic fatalities during the first five months of the year involved alcohol.

Inexperienced young drivers are another factor in this year’s increased traffic fatality toll, Mulcahy said. Drivers ages 15 to 20 were responsible for 21 percent of all traffic fatalities, up from 16 percent last year.

Mulcahy said the biggest factor in preventing fatalities is driver behavior.

“Eighty-five percent of all our motor vehicle crashes are caused by driver error,” Mulcahy said. “It’s time to get over the feeling that when we’re behind the wheel, we’re invincible.” He urged all citizens to make a difference in the lives of their family and friends and insist that they buckle up, slow down, and drive sober.

Mulcahy said several activities planned for the closing months of the year may help stem the rising tide of traffic fatalities. They include:

- stepped up traffic enforcement by the Wisconsin State Patrol and many of the state’s 649 local law enforcement agencies
- support by WisDOT of primary enforcement of the state’s seat belt law.
- weekly reports to the media on fatalities plus announcements of extra enforcement efforts.
- development of partnerships with transportation and other concerned groups including the Department of Public Instruction, the Department of Tourism, driver schools, SADD chapters, the Wisconsin Chapter of the

American Automobile Association, the Wisconsin Council of Safety, law enforcement associations, the Federal Highway Administration and others to spread the word to buckle up, slow down, and drive sober.

6. Newsletter Story

This story type is used to communicate information to a specific audience using a print or electronic newsletter developed for that audience as part of a strategy to manage information, opinion or image.

Principal Characteristics

- development of a strategy
- thorough information gathering
- sorting of information to glean the most important as part of the overall strategy
- summary or feature lead
- inverted pyramid or narrative structure
- quotes generated by the writer or drawn from sources
- strong, clear, concise language
- effective transitions
- short sentences and paragraphs
- present or past tense

Sample

Audience: Members of the American Automobile Association of Wisconsin

Goal: Persuade audience to drive safely and reinforce AAA's image as an important auto safety resource

Traffic Crashes: A World Health Crisis

March 30, 2004

By Ted R. Gambill

The words "world health" tend to evoke images of people in foreign lands suffering from infectious diseases long controlled in our country. Relatively few in our part of the world might include themselves in the at-risk group when examining the status of world health.

The truth is, however, that the population of the entire world is threatened by a growing source of injury and death that demands global prevention efforts. This plague is the crisis of traffic crashes.

Each year, more than 1.2 million people worldwide die in motor vehicle crashes, and an estimated 10 million to 15 million people are injured. Experts predict that roadway fatalities will double by 2020. Jumping from their current ranking of ninth-highest, fatal traffic crashes would thus become the third-highest cause of global disease burden.

Wisconsin is not immune from the ills of traffic crashes. During 2003, our state experienced its worst year for traffic fatalities in more than two decades: 840 people lost their lives.

In response to the growing number of traffic deaths worldwide, the World Health Organization (WHO) has chosen the theme of "Road Safety" for World Health Day 2004 on April 7. WHO aims to raise awareness of traffic safety as a public health issue. To accomplish this goal, WHO is encouraging advocacy for increased and sustained action for traffic-safety policy, programs, funding and research. Gov. Jim Doyle has also proclaimed April 7 as World Health Day in Wisconsin and is urging the people of our state to recognize the importance of the "Road Safety" theme of this observance.

To contribute to these World Health Day efforts, AAA and many other international organizations will be emphasizing the importance of safety belt use. Research indicates that between 1975 and 2002, safety belts saved about 164,700 lives in the United States alone. It has been shown that if all motor vehicle occupants consistently wore safety belts, almost 10,000 American deaths could be prevented each year. To help increase safety belt use, AAA is highlighting effective strategies, such as educational campaigns and standard – or primary – enforcement of safety belt laws.

Primary safety belt laws can reduce a state's motor vehicle fatalities significantly. Currently, 21 states have primary seatbelt laws. Wisconsin does not have a primary safety belt law, and our state ranks relatively low in safety belt use by motorists.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), states that progress from secondary enforcement to primary enforcement of their safety belt law typically experience an increase in belt use of between 10

and 15 percentage points during the first year of the law's implementation. NHTSA estimates that a 15 percentage point belt-use increase spurred by a standard-enforcement law in Wisconsin could be expected to save as many as 76 lives per year. This simple change in the way we think about our safety belt law would also be likely to prevent nearly 2,000 injuries and save almost \$200 million in medical costs and lost time annually.

Individuals can also play a major role in fighting the global "disease" of traffic deaths and fatalities. Such efforts don't require a medical degree. There are actions that each one of us can take to improve traffic safety: wearing a safety belt, obeying traffic laws, avoiding drinking and driving, and knowing our own personal driving limitations. Traffic crashes threaten people throughout the world, and few are immune to their dangers.

I invite you to take part in World Health Day efforts this April 7 – and from now on – to take the steps that will help safeguard the health and well-being of all who share our roadways.

Ted R. Gambill is president/chief operating officer of AAA Wisconsin, an affiliate of The Auto Club Group of six Midwestern AAA clubs representing more than 4.1 million members. The AAA/CAA federation includes 76 motor clubs in the U.S. and Canada and serves more than 47 million members

7. Strategy Memo/Executive Summary

This story type is used to convey the writer's strategy to the people responsible for approving or implementing it or to summarize the writer's analysis and evaluation of a situation.

Principal Characteristics

- thorough information gathering
- development of a strategy or evaluation of a situation
- sorting of information to glean the most important elements of the strategy or situation
- summary lead
- inverted pyramid structure
- details of strategy and evidence to support their effectiveness
- recognition of flaws to the strategy and evidence to minimize those flaws
- strong, clear, concise language
- effective transitions
- short sentences and paragraphs
- present tense
- conclusion reiterating the strategy

Sample (fictional)

Audience: Zenith Communications' client, Mothers Against Drunk Driving

Goal: Persuade client to continue with successful marketing campaign and add events publicity to the mix

Zenith Communications recommends Wisconsin's Mothers Against Drunk Driving chapter continue a successful marketing campaign launched in 2004 but increase emphasis on age-targeted event publicity to boost memorability.

Market research throughout 2004-05 showed improved awareness of drunk driving among young adults, connected in large part to MADD's campaign. The campaign included print, radio and television advertising, accompanied by ancillary public relations, such as press releases, media appearances and print and electronic newsletters. We suggest adding to these efforts by increasing MADD's presence at major events attracting young adults.

Through appearances at athletic competitions, outdoor gatherings and music festivals, MADD can address its message directly to the audience most vulnerable to drunk driving. Support materials distributed at these events, including fliers, key chains and free ride coupons, will increase MADD's effectiveness by taking its message beyond the event. Such continuing communication is essential to maintaining drunk driving in top-of-mind awareness.

The costs of staffing events and purchasing materials are largely set off in the budget by decreased spending on advertising development and television and radio media buys. Because the advertising spots will continue on the same theme, MADD will require no development and less air time overall to acquaint the audience with the message.

Zenith Communications estimates an overall marketing budget of \$140,000, with \$35,000 of that for events publicity. We estimate MADD will reach 86,000 people through 42 targeted events throughout the state in 2007. At a cost-per-

impression of only \$.40, events publicity proves a cost-effective means of reaching a larger audience in a more personal and memorable way.

In addition to expanding events publicity, Zenith Communications recommends MADD focus its attention on connecting with corporate partners not only to raise supporting funds, but also to relay MADD's message through the workplace. Market research on the recent campaign showed that employer attention to drunk driving has dwindled over the last decade. MADD can use its existing partnerships to begin to persuade employers of the importance of this critical issue.

With a presence at major events drawing young adults and added attention to communication through other routes, MADD will ensure its message of safety and sanity in drinking and driving reaches the audience most in need of that message.

8. Direct Mail Letter

This story type is used when an organization seeks to persuade individuals with a personal approach.

Principal Characteristics

- thorough information gathering
- development of a strategy
- sorting of information to glean the most persuasive elements
- summary or short feature lead
- narrative structure
- evidence to support claims or requests
- recognition and management of contrary interests, when evident
- strong, clear, concise language
- effective transitions
- short sentences and paragraphs
- present tense
- conclusion supplying a way for the audience to respond

Sample

Audience: Newspaper and magazine editors and television and radio news directors

Goal: Persuade audience that they can make a difference in lowering state highway fatalities

November 10, 2000

Dear Editor:

Highway safety in Wisconsin is reaching a crisis level in the year 2000. Currently, we are on pace for more than 800 fatalities this year, which would be the worst record in more than a decade. In the holiday season of November and December, our state traditionally experiences a high number of highway fatalities. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation is asking Wisconsin motorists to help "give death a holiday."

Through our research, we know that the vast majority of crashes occur because of poor driving behavior: speeds that are too fast for road conditions, alcohol use and lack of seat belt use. Our ultimate success in reversing the high fatality trend depends on the assistance of all citizens to:

- Buckle up – about 65 percent of fatalities were not wearing seat belts;
- Slow down – speed is a primary factor in 30 percent of our fatal crashes; and
- Drive sober – alcohol is a factor in 38 percent of fatalities.

A fatal crash can happen to anyone, anywhere. You or I are just as likely to be a part of the grim statistics if we do not take personal responsibility for our driving practices. Please take some time to consider how you can make a difference in coming weeks to “give death a holiday” on Wisconsin’s highways.

Sincerely,

Terrence D. Mulcahy, P.E.
Secretary

9. Print Ad/Direct Mail Flier

This story type is exceedingly brief, seeking to persuade an audience with a single concept relayed in a few direct words or sentences.

Principal Characteristics

- thorough information gathering
- development of a strategy
- definition of a creative concept
- short headline relaying creative concept
- short phrases or sentences to expand on concept, when needed
- strong, clear, concise language
- brand identification

Sample

Audience: Drinkers, ages 16 to 49

Goal: Persuade audience to use a designated driver when drinking

Here’s to the designated driver (superimposed over three bottles of Budweiser being toasted)
Do the ride thing

We all make a difference. Budweiser (standard tagline throughout campaign)

10. Critique

This story type is used to critically assess media content, food, venues or performances.

Principal Characteristics

- thorough information gathering
- development of an opinion
- summary or feature lead
- narrative structure
- brief, interwoven description of the subject
- evidence to support opinion
- recognition of points to the contrary
- strong, clear, concise language
- effective transitions
- short sentences and paragraphs
- present tense

Sample

Audience: Readers of Entertainment Weekly

Goal: Offer opinion of new movie

The Fast and the Furious features what could be the first Iron John drag race. In Los Angeles, Brian (Paul Walker), an undercover cop who looks blond and boyish enough to be an understudy for Lance Bass of 'N Sync, and Toretto (Vin Diesel), the hulky speed demon and thief he has been trying to get the goods on, are lined up at a stoplight, eyeing each other like buzzards. Spontaneously, they agree to race to the train tracks that lie a quarter of a mile ahead. As they launch into gone-in-20-seconds overdrive, a train approaches, and the question lingers: Who will be the one to chicken out, and who will be fearless enough to hit the red dashboard-computer button that triggers a nitrous oxide fuel injection, rocketing the car ahead with Batmobile fury? The two rivals glance at each other, and suddenly, with a slight nod of the head, they both agree to go for the fuel injection. They're going to beat that train--or run smack into it -- together.

There have been countless auto-racing movies, from Grand Prix to Heart Like a Wheel to Driven, but The Fast and the Furious is a movie about California Car Culture. Its characters are young and pretty and hip and anonymous enough to look like hangers-on at a velvet-rope party for the movie's premiere, and the story is organized around racial-tribal patterns as regimented as anything in an early-'60s delinquent fable.

The drag races here take place in the desert or along midnight L.A. boulevards, with baby-faced gangland studs speeding for the prize of cash, groupies and their own manhood. "I live my life a quarter of a mile at a time," says Toretto, in the movie's most irresistible bad line. "For those 10 seconds, I'm free." He's enunciating the philosophy of the drag racer though the trouble with drag-race movies is that those 10 seconds tend to flash by all too quickly, leaving us, in the case of The Fast and the Furious, with a logy crime-bust melodrama--Point Break on hot wheels.

Standing in contrast to all of the perfectly angled cheekbones is Vin Diesel, whose every aspect is thick and round: his muscles, his lips, his close-cropped cranium, his syrupy basso growl. Diesel can be a powerful actor (he ruled Boiler Room like a pumped-up Miguel Ferrer), but The Fast and the Furious, in trying to make him "noble," just ends up bleaching his surly charisma.

As for Michelle Rodriguez, who appears here in her first major role after Girlfight, I'm afraid that her snarl has been candified, her presence reduced to a mere tic of attitude. The Fast and the Furious works hard to be exciting, but the movie scarcely lives up to its title. It could have used a bit of a fuel injection itself.