

WRITING A PRESS RELEASE

What is a press release?

By definition a press release is simply a statement prepared for distribution to the media. The purpose of a press release is to give journalists information that is useful, accurate and interesting.

How is a press release used?

Press releases are often sent alone, by e-mail, fax or regular mail. They can also be part of a full press kit or may be accompanied by a pitch letter.

[AGO or CHAPTER LOGO HERE]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Jill Smith
Publicity, your local chapter name
jill@anytown.com
[phone no.]

MAIN TITLE OF PRESS RELEASE GOES HERE ALL IN UPPERCASE

Subtitle Goes Here [use upper and lower case plus italics]

NEW YORK, NY. (DATE) — The lead paragraph includes the “who, what, when, where and how” of the story. The body of the press release begins with the date and city for which the press release is originated (should be typed in a clear, basic font such as Times New Roman, or Arial and double-spaced). The first paragraph of the press release should contain in brief detail what the press release is about. If the reporter were only to read the lead of a good press release, he'd have everything he needed to get started.

The second paragraph explains in detail why the event or activity is important and why potential audiences should want to attend. Also included in the second paragraph is generally a quote that gives the release both a personal touch and adds credibility. A 'human interest' angle or anything

that pulls at the heartstrings is sure to catch the journalist's eye. The balance of the press release serves to back up whatever claims were made in the lead and headline.

The third and generally final paragraph is a summation of the release and gives further information on your chapter with the chapter contact information clearly spelled out.

Finally, insert a boilerplate statement, describing the AGO, your chapter, and what you do (include the AGO and chapter websites, if possible).

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(NOTE: the three #'s mark the end of the press release).

If you would like more information about this topic or to schedule an interview with John Smith, please call Jill Smith at _____ or email her at _____.

NOTE: If your press release exceeds one page, the second page should indicate Page Two in the upper right hand corner.

Some Key Things to Remember:

- Stay away from extreme phrases like "breakthrough," "unique," "the best," "one of a kind," etc.
- Always write it from a journalist's perspective. Never use "I" or "we" unless it's in a quote.
- Shorter is better. If you can say it in two pages, great. If you can say it in one page, even better.

A Newsworthy Message Is:

- Something unique.
- A seasonal activity or problem
- An unusual event
- A new solution to an old problem

- The local aspects of a national story

Timing Is Everything:

Contact the media in your area and ask them what their deadlines are since lead times vary greatly for different media outlets. Magazines may require several months between hearing your pitch and publishing a story, while newspapers usually need one to two weeks of lead-time. Calendars for listings of arts events also have a variety of deadlines. Don't forget to contact your classical radio station, if you have one, to see about possible interviews and on-air announcements.

Radio and television news stations are generally focused on breaking news, which means you will need to act fast and, if possible, create a message relating to the hot topic of the day or week.