

## Writing a press release

The first paragraph of your press release should answer the 5 W's:

- Who (is involved)?
- What (is happening)?
- Where (is it happening)?
- Why?
- When?

It should also answer the three questions readers always ask when looking at a news story?

- What's new?
- What's different?
- Why do I care?

By the end of the paragraph, your reader should know the basics of the story and want to read more.

- Try to use an attention grabbing head line- one that encapsulates your story and invites the editor to continue reading
- Don't hold back an interesting or important nugget of information until the end! A press release isn't a murder mystery - the editor doesn't want to wait until the end to find out the whole story.
- If all the main points are contained within the first paragraph, the following paragraphs should give us more detail without leaving questions unanswered.
- You should structure your release so that, even if it were to be cut after the first paragraph (or the second, third, fourth, fifth or sixth) it would make complete sense as a story. After all, if a bigger story breaks and your release has to be edited at the last minute, it could very well end up simply having the last few paragraphs chopped off!
- There may be people who will ask questions regarding the campaign and the key messages delivered through press releases and written articles. It is important to be at the end of the phone or email to answer any questions that may arise. So make sure to include your contact details at the end of the press release.
- Remember the 5 W's! Find out who to send your press release to by calling your local paper or radio station and make sure you provide your contact details.

