

# News Story

As you read the following news article, think about its defining characteristics—what makes it a news story as opposed to a fictional story or an essay or a poem or a movie review?

Note your observations in the margins around the article.

## Community service requirement “a better idea than expected”

➔ Notta Real Person  
Reporter

After getting off to a rough start last spring, the community service requirement at Huron is gaining acceptance by staff and students.

“I never thought the community service project would fly,” senior Eric Doe said. “But once I realized that I wasn’t going to get out of the requirement, I decided to try to have fun with it.”

With the help of Social Studies Teacher Stu White, students have initiated community service projects from tutoring elementary students to painting murals to raking leaves around the community.

“I knew that without strong teacher support, this program was going to have a tough time

surviving,” White said. “The idea behind the program is too important to let it die.”

However, not all students feel the requirement is worthwhile.

“I just don’t see how raking some lady’s leaves is educating me,” sophomore Eric Evans said. “This whole thing is pointless.”



Huron junior Eric Doe helps Logan Elementary student Tim Yu with an art project.

*Photo by Kim Smith*

Principal Arthur Williams presented the community service requirement to teachers in 2002. After three and a half years of negotiating and planning, the requirement was instituted for all grades last spring.

“After the controversy of getting started, I’d say people now believe this is a better idea than expected,” Williams said.

What could you learn about writing news stories from reading this article?

# Anatomy of a News Story

## ATTRIBUTION TIPS

Use *said* to emphasize the quote; don't get fancy. Use *stated* when quoting a formal statement. Always be clear about WHO is talking. Place attributes after the first sentence of quotes. Avoid referring to the reporter as in "When asked."

Headlines use "down style:" only the first word and proper nouns are capitalized. Use the headline to pull the reader into the story.

## HEADLINE CHECKLIST:

Use present tense. Use a comma in place of "and." Separate complete thoughts with a semicolon. Keep all parts of a verb on one line. Keep adjectives and their nouns together. Use active verbs; omit forms of the verb *to be*. Use alliteration sparingly (it gets old fast).

## Community service requirement "a better notion than expected"

All stories require a by-line and title with graphic.

➔ **Notta Real Person**  
Reporter

time surviving," White said. "The program is too important to let it die. Students are finding this program is a better notion than they expected."

This paraphrase is a transition flowing into the next quote.

## LEADS

Provide a **brief** summary. Put the key facts up top. Coax the reader to read. Tell the *5 Ws* and *How*. Sometimes you can begin with a quote or a question but **DON'T** overdo it!

After getting off to a rough start last spring, the community service requirement at Huron is gaining acceptance by staff and students.



Huron junior Eric Doe helps Logan Elementary student Tim Yu with an art project.

*Photo by Kim Smith*

However, not all students feel the requirement is worthwhile.

"I just don't see how raking some lady's leaves is educating me," sophomore Alexander Zimmerman said. "This program is pointless."

Be sure to present quotes from all sides of the story.

The body of a news story should alternate between attributed quotes and transitions. Transitions add information, explain and help the story flow.

"I never thought the community service project would fly," senior Eric Doe said. "But once I realized that I wasn't going to get out of the requirement, I decided to try to have fun with it."

Principal Arthur Williams presented the community service requirement to teachers in 2002.

Be concise. Combine sentences if you can. Keep paragraphs under 50 words.

This paragraph is a quote that adds information. Use as many different quotes as possible. Preparing open-ended questions before you begin interviewing provides the best results. **A good reporter gets the PEOPLE to tell the story.** Don't just ask your friends for quotes. Ask the people who are involved.

With the help of Social Studies Teacher Stu White, students have initiated community service projects from tutoring elementary students to painting murals to raking leaves around the community.

**"Some programs are worth the fight."**

After three and a half years of negotiating and planning, the requirement was instituted for all grades last spring.

"After a controversial start, I'd say people now believe this is a better idea than expected," Williams said. "Some programs are worth the fight, and this is certainly one of them."

Save old, less important, known, and/or background information for the end of the story.

Each quote **ALWAYS** gets its own paragraph; **NEVER** bury quotes in the middle of a transition.

Body font is 9 point Times justified. Columns should be divided by .25 inch gutters.

Avoid jargon, cliches, redundancies, sexist and otherwise inappropriate language.

If a quote is used in a headline or highlighted as a pull quote, give the full context of the quote in the body of the story.