

EASY WRITING WORKSHOP

Presented by

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@ the 20th SAASTEC Conference

WHY?

- **Funding?**
- **Entertainment?**
- **Getting your SC known?**
- **More feet?**
- **???**

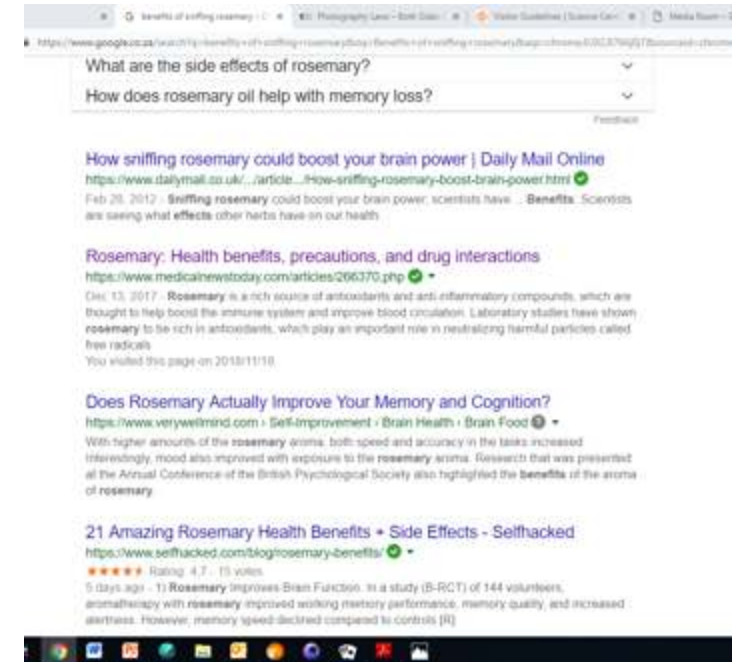
**The whole point of
writing an article is
so that somebody
will read it.**

Headlines Count!

Know whether you are writing for *on-line* or *print* (newspaper/newsletter).

On-line – keep your headline to less than 70 characters (and you need to squeeze in as many key words or phrases as possible for SEO purposes - if you want Google to rank your article). Make sure your headline contains the meat of your story – this is because most on-line articles only show the first few lines (aka 70 characters) and if it does not grab attention, people will not click on it and read your story.

Print – no limit, but needs to be catchy because it's the second thing that people look at. The first thing they look at is the picture. Always have good quality, interesting pictures with your article with a relative caption. If it includes people, make very sure you spell their names correctly.



Try using numbers in your headlines.

Numbers stand out and make your article look more factual. For example:

**78% of South African Children Cannot Read
for Meaning in Grade 4**

Use numbered lists as headlines...

Use odd numbers – *using even numbers makes it look like you did not put too much effort into your article.*

For example:

- 13 Ways That Science Centres Can Improve Your Life**
- 5 Facts You Never Knew About Science Centres**
- 7 Secrets About What Goes On In Science Centres**
- 15 Fabulous Ways to Entertain Your Children During the Christmas Holidays**
- 7 Reasons Why You Should Visit Your Local Science Centre**
- 9 Tricks / 3 Techniques / 1 Way etc etc**

*Take note: you **never** start a sentence in the body of your text with a digit, and you should always spell out any numbers less than ten.*

Get personal!

For example:

**We Can Help You Ace Your
Matric Maths Exam!**

**People also love things
that they can learn easily**

**“How to”
works well in a headline.**

**How To Ace Your Matric Maths Exam
In Four Easy Steps**

Use testimonials as headlines.

“I Loved Every Minute Of My Visit To The Science Centre And Learned A Lot!”

Include a picture of the learner/visitor. This is a very easy way to create quick, short articles – either for your blog, community paper or newsletter. A picture really does speak a thousand words.

**Make your text user
friendly.**

**Use spoken English – slang and
clichés are fine to use in articles –
*it makes them more human.***

Use contractions (we're instead of we are etc). *If you are used to writing written English, it is sometimes it is easier to write your article first and then go back and shorten it or change it.*
The easier to read the better!

CHECK that you don't use the same words over and over. Search your document for certain words and replace them.

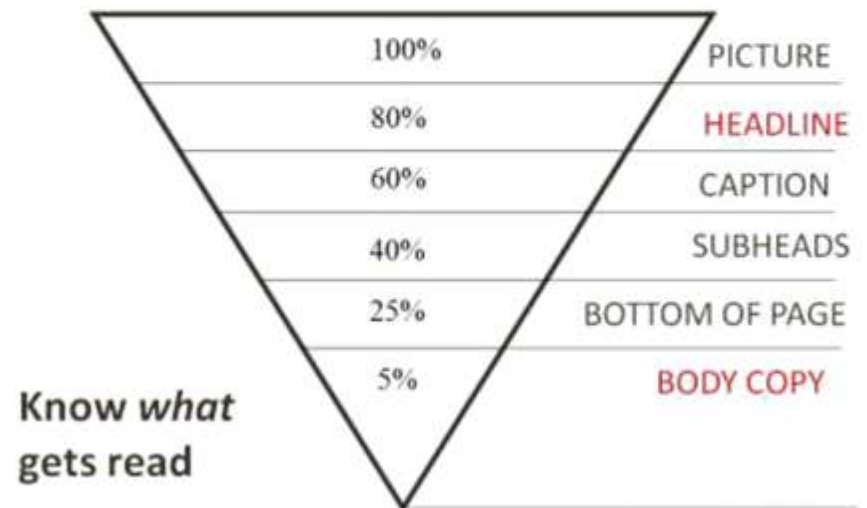
People stopped reading in sequence years ago.

They skim until they find
something interesting.

According to David Ogilvy
only 5% read the body of
your article.

*When you have written your headline, you have spent eighty
cents out of your dollar.*

—David Ogilvy



(DAVID OGILVY)

SKELETON OF YOUR ARTICLE

– if you are trying to ‘sell’ your science centre...

- **Get their attention with a rousing headline.**
- **Once you’ve got their attention (which does not last long), you need to keep them interested.**
- **Make them want to come and visit for themselves.**
- **Make sure you have easily accessible contact details or clickable buttons if you want them to sign up for a newsletter or enter a competition on-line.**

According to research – if it’s more than three (yes, 3) clicks away, people give up. So make it easy.

PRESS RELEASES

are bites of interesting information that are sent out to the media that often link to more information and are usually formatted in the following way:

Headline – the most important part – a simple single sentence that tells the editor what the article is all about. Don't try to be clever or obscure.

Date – When the article can be released (either immediately or on a certain date).

Opening paragraph – this is a bit like a summary of your article. All the interesting bits crafted together to capture the editor's interest. Stick to five lines per paragraph.

Body paragraphs – Flesh out the opening paragraph with more information. Again, no more than five lines in a paragraph.

Extra information about your science centre and contact details. – If you've won any awards this would be the place to put it.

Images – Do not include high resolution images with your press release. Much as editors love images, clogging up their mailbox with high res pictures really irritates them. Include a thumbnail, with a link to a high res image in your media room on your website.

HOT TIP – Write the body of your press release first. Then condense that down to the opening paragraph and then write your headline last. This way you don't sit gnawing your knuckles waiting for inspiration.

Mix up the length of your sentences.

**Never underestimate the power of a short
sentence in-between longer ones.**

The Fabulouso Science Centre is situated on the Eastern Bank of Nowhere, only five kilometres from the centre of town. Come and visit! Bring the whole family, there's something for everybody. Take a trip down memory lane in our time machine exhibit. It's the only one like it in the country. Don't miss out.

***Always read your article
aloud to see how it
sounds. If it sounds
clumsy to you – it's
going to sound clumsy
to everybody else too!***

Set time limits

FOMO is alive and well.

If you want to attract people to your SC say that... this exhibit/offer/show will only be available for two weeks or something similar.

Book now to avoid missing out!

Contact details/website/FB/link (make it easy)