

The Wall Street Journal Method of Story Organization

The Anecdotal Lead

- Cinematic. Creates a picture, a scene.
- Uses dialogue. A person speaks.
- Captures the essence of the story.
- Portrays the conflict
- Illustrates the main character
- Uses real people in real settings
- Makes the story come alive
- Provides a thread of continuity
- Is relevant to the rest of the story

The Nut Graf

- Not* a glorified lead that comes later
- Answers the "so what?"
- Summarizes significant facts
- Organizes the story structure
- Problem/cause/impact/resolution
- Conflict/roots of conflict/resolution
- Puts story in several coherent sentences
- Follow your nut graf's structure
- Use three or four "nut meats" to organize

The "By No Means All" Graf

- Turns the story premise on its head
- Balances the story
- Provides a platform for opposition
- Followed by countervailing quote

The Kicker

- Rides off into sunset
- Closing scene
- Circles back to opening character
- Provides an end to a beginning and middle
- Not meant to be cut

Converting the WSJ Story to TV

Here is what the WSJ story can look like in TV form

(Nut becomes anchor lead in) *State universities are pondering and often asking for stiff tuition increases. As News 25's Max Utsler reports, that has revived the debate about tuition waivers for faculty, staff, and their spouses and dependents.*

(Anecdotal lead becomes start of video story) *When Jerel Hilding decided to leave his professional dance troupe for academia, he thought one of the perks of a teaching job might be free college tuition for his children.*

(Bridge becomes set up for 1st bite) *He was surprised to learn that Kansas University—and many of the other state universities he applied to—didn't offer tuition waivers.*

(Quote becomes sound bite) *"We don't really get any perks," said Hilding, an associate professor of dance. "We even have to pay for parking."*

(Story goes on to show how this is a problem for more persons than just Hilding and what the university is trying to do to alleviate it).

Sample Timing and Structure

Anchor Lead-in (why and why now) : 15

Open (write to the video) : 14

Bridge to bite : 09

1st Bite (person most affected) : 13

Bridge to 2nd bite (story broadens) : 15

2nd Bite (official source) : 13

Close (where do we go from here) : 11

Anchor Tag : 08

Video TRT 1:15 Total story time 1:38

Your assignment:

- You and your group will log onto <http://online.wsj.com/home-page> and choose a major news story from the Wall Street Journal. Using the WSJ method we just reviewed, you will rewrite the print story into a story for TV by storyboarding.
- This storyboard should be well labeled including what type of shots (LS,MS,CU), the exact text to be said (no text overlay on this one) and time limit to be followed.
- This will be done using the WSJ method for a TV story, you need to use the 15-10-15-10-15-10-15 rule. You write a 15 second anchor, followed by a 10 second opening, then follow with a series of bridges (:10) and bites (:15) seconds (usually two sets total, and then write a 15-second close anchor.