



*Dream of  
Travel Writing*

# Article Nuts and Bolts: Putting Together a News Brief

by Gabi Logan, founder of Dream of Travel Writing

A blurred background image of a coffee shop setting. In the foreground, there is a white cup of coffee on a saucer. To the left, a smartphone is visible. In the background, there is a vase of purple flowers and a white napkin. The text "Today, we're going to talk about..." is overlaid in the center.

Today, we're going to  
talk about...

1. What does writing tight really mean?
2. The classic inverted pyramid
3. What do news briefs really look like in the travel context, since we're not talking run-of-the-mill newspapers here
4. In-depth look at specific examples of news briefs from "the wild"





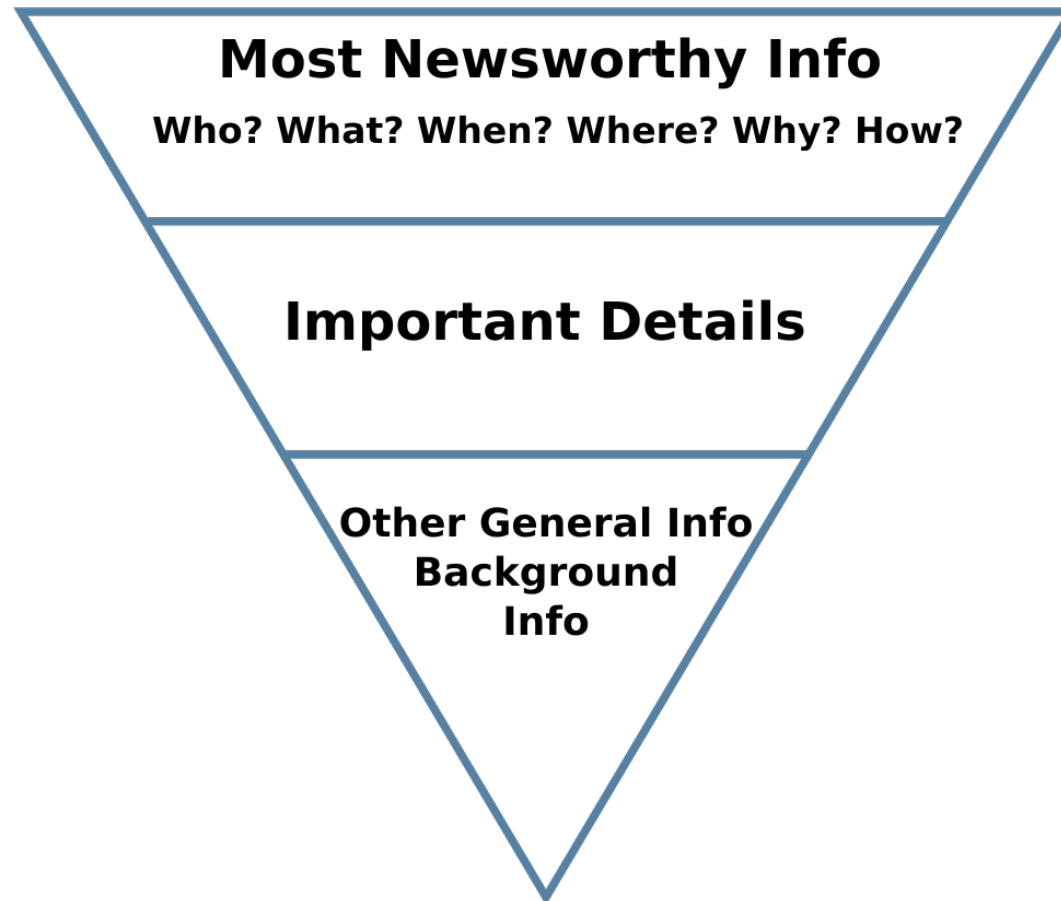
Before we get this train moving...

Why do I mean when I say writing tight or short, and why does it matter?

(a.k.a. why writing news briefs makes all your writing better)



# The Basic Pyramid

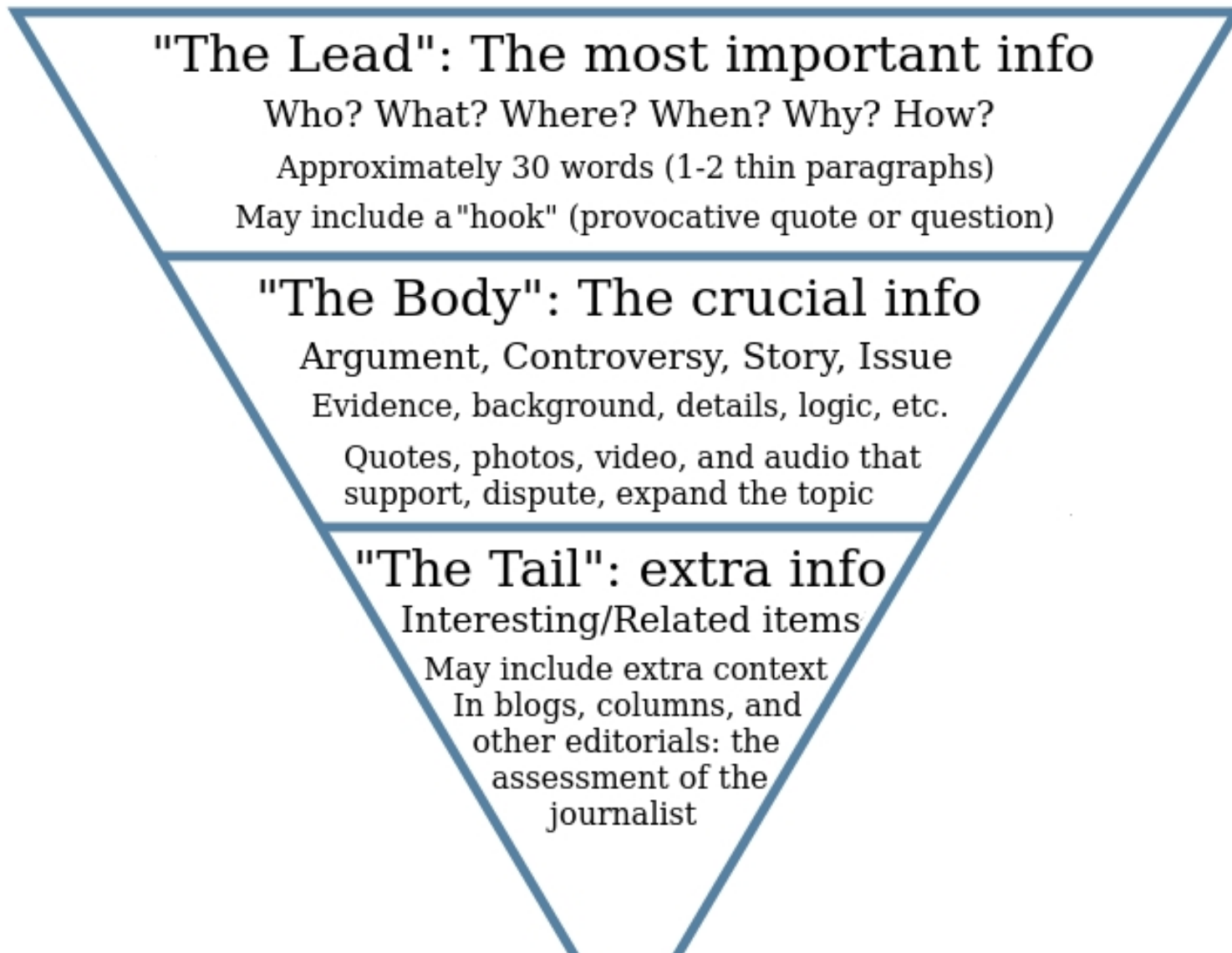


# The Building Blocks of the Pyramid

- Who
- What
- Where
- When
- Why
- How

Are you currently address these right off the bat in your pieces? They *can* fit in an attention-grabbing lead!

# The Content of the Pyramid





# What does this look like in travel?

- HUGE in front-of-book sections
- In smaller, trade, or uber-niche mags can be written by staff
- In big magazines that pay \$1/word, can be a great way to get well-paid work with little time on your end
- Very, very focused
- Calendar-style, openings, new features, trends



# Streaming Music

A Danish band heads down under(water)

Of the roughly 700 performers at this month's Sydney Festival, Australia's largest annual celebration of the arts, one group in particular will be hoping to make a real splash. The Danish avant-garde band Between Music will be performing its hour-long set, *AquaSonic*, fully submerged underwater, with each musician encased in an individual glass tank.

The ensemble's cocreators, Robert Karlsson and Laila Skovmand, spent 10 years developing the show. Skovmand devised a haunting, mermaid-like vocal style by learning to sing through an air bubble in her mouth. (By sucking the bubble in, she can sing the next note.) "It has been a long process," she admits, "involving lots of practice with my head submerged in water."

The singer, who wears a weight belt under her evening gown during the show, has much more than her head in the water now. "*AquaSonic* started purely as an artistic exploration,"

she says. "But then we needed scientists and engineers to develop instruments that can be played underwater." These include a hydraulophone, a tonal instrument that generates sound through turbulence in water, and a glass instrument called a crystallophone. Each performer surfaces every 30 to 80 seconds to breathe at predetermined points in the piece.

This may sound like a gimmick, but Skovmand insists otherwise. "We are definitely not a novelty act," she says. "This is a culmination of a decade of experimentation, passion, and commitment." *AquaSonic*, which she hopes to bring to North America in 2019, is the first of four planned pieces inspired by human evolution. For the next in the series, the audience will be inside one enormous musical instrument that will function as a portable venue. "It should be most interesting," she says. "No one will be underwater, though."

# Winging It

A stadium designer scales down with a butterfly-inspired cocktail lounge

Kansas City-based architect David Manica has designed stadiums around the world, from FC Barcelona's upgraded Camp Nou to the Raiders' future home in Las Vegas. Now he has come home to open a decidedly more intimate venue: the Monarch Cocktail Bar & Lounge.

"I'm happy that I get to travel around the world and come back to Kansas City," Manica says, "but there wasn't anything here like the high-end bars of London or Moscow. So I decided to open one myself."


The name of the bar resonates with the city's sports history, as the Kansas City Monarchs were a legendary Negro league baseball team that employed Satchel Paige, Jackie Robinson, and Ernie Banks. But Manica's inspiration actually came from a fellow frequent flyer: the monarch butterfly.

Butterflies are a key element of the bar's signature fixture, a scene-stealing chandelier that's made up of 1,000 laser-cut, custom-formed acrylic lepidoptera designed in cooperation with the Kansas City Art Institute. (The shape of the butterflies was inspired by a handcrafted sculpture by Venetian artist Paolo Brandolisio.) Then there's the menu, which features cocktails inspired by the monarch's migratory routes, complete with GPS coordinates. The West Coast Migration, for instance, includes green chile vodka from St. George distillery in California and Sombra mezcal from Mexico. "We liked the idea that the menu would be more than a list of drinks," Manica says, "that it would tell a story—and that story, of course, is tied to the monarch butterfly."



Acrylic chandelier of All Levels Photo © 2014, full view, Brandon Gorman © 2014





# House of Spirits

A famous haunted house makes its screen debut



Dame Helen Mirren gets top billing in this month's supernatural thriller *Winchester*, but it's the setting that's the real star. The Winchester Mystery House in San Jose, California, was built by firearm heiress Sarah Winchester—who Mirren plays in the film—after the deaths of her husband and infant daughter led her to believe she was cursed and needed to placate the ghosts of those killed by Winchester rifles. “The house is mind-blowing,” Mirren says. “It’s like a doll’s house but enormous—lots and lots of tiny little

rooms and little corridors that go on and on and on and on.”

Winchester designed the house herself, never stopping construction during her life. Topping out at 160 rooms, it may have been built to confound spirits, with stairs that lead nowhere, windows that look into other rooms or at walls, and a door that opens to a two-story drop. The number 13 recurs throughout: 13 bathrooms, 13-step stairways, 13-paned windows.

The house has been a tourist site since Winchester's 1922 death (tours are offered

daily), but this is the first time it's been used as a film set. It acts as a constant, looming character in its own right, and writer-directors Michael and Peter Spierig found that seeing it was crucial to understanding its maker. “We had expectations of finding a really scary house when we first visited. But getting to know the house and its history, we’ve grown very fond of the place and the woman who created it,” says Michael. “The house is full of mysterious oddities—but also design experiments and patented features that make a lot of sense.”

# How do you pitch these pieces?

- Need to keep the pitch crazy short
- Can be as simple as the “why this, why now”
- Editors often want to see the final piece in the pitch



Thanks so much  
for joining us today!

It was a pleasure chatting  
travel writing with you 😊

Have a follow up question on this webinar? Email [questions@dreamoftravelwriting.com](mailto:questions@dreamoftravelwriting.com) and we'll cover it in an upcoming webinar or in our Monday reader mailbag post on the Six-Figure Travel Writer blog.

