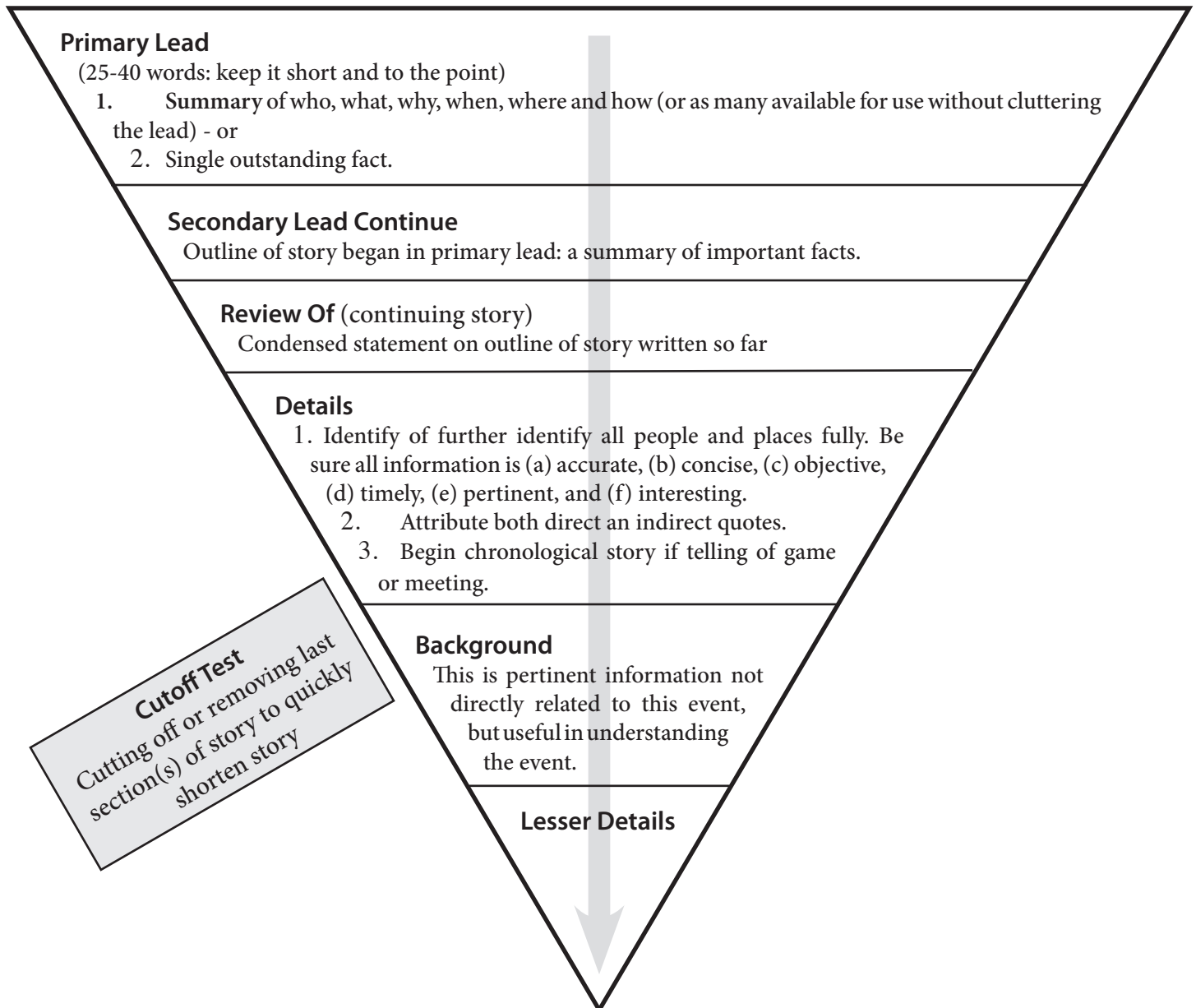
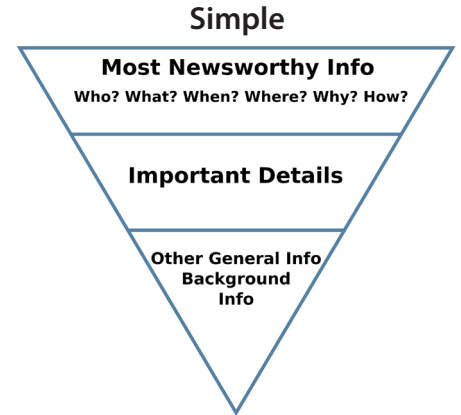


## Basic News Style: Inverted Pyramid

Newspaper articles are written using an **inverted pyramid format** as shown below. The most important information is at the top (beginning of article) and the least important information is at the bottom (end of article). Has the ability to undergo **cutoff test** (removing last section(s) of story to quickly shorten story).



**Cutoff Test**  
Cutting off or removing last section(s) of story to quickly shorten story

## Inverted Pyramid Checklist

When you write an inverted pyramid news story, use the following checklist to make sure that you have done it correctly.

**Information should be presented in descending order of importance.**

### Leads

- One sentence
- 30-35 words maximum
- Lead tells the most important information in the story and gives specific facts

### Second paragraph

- Expand or develop some idea introduced in the lead
- Should not drop the story into a chronological narrative

### Attribution

- All major information should be attributed unless it is commonly known or unless the information itself strongly implies the source.
- Don't dump a string of direct quotations on the reader.
- Direct quotations should be no more than two sentences long.
- Direct quotations and their attribution should be punctuated properly. Here's an example:  
"John did not go with her," he said.
- Elements of a direct quotation should be in the proper sequence, as in the example above: direct quote, speaker, verb.

### AP style

- Always. Check numbers, dates, locations, titles, etc.

### Check the following

- Pronoun-antecedent agreement
- It, its, it's  
"it is . . .", "there is . . .", "there are . . ." structures; avoid these. They are passive and vague.
- Use the past tense, not the present.
- Comma splice or run-on sentence, such as  
He picked up the ball, he ran down the field.  
Sally does not know where he is he is not here.  
These are grammatically incorrect.
- Plurals -- don't make them by using an "apostrophe s".

### Short paragraphs

- Any paragraph more than three sentences is definitely too long
- Any paragraph that is three sentences is probably too long.

### Wordiness

- Have you checked for too much verbiage, redundancies, unnecessary repetitions, etc.

### Name, title

- When you put the title before a name, do not separate them with commas, such as  
(WRONG): Game warden, Brad Fisher, arrested the trespassers.
- When the name comes before the title, the title should be set off by commas.  
Brad Fisher, the game warden, arrested the trespassers.

### Transitions

- Use them to tie your paragraphs together. Don't jump from one subject to another in a new paragraph without giving the reader some warning.

**Don't copy the wording of the information sheet.**

### Names

- Check them once more to make sure they are spelled correctly.