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# Steps to Writing a Press Release about Your Published Research

## Working with Your Media Office

# What is a "press release"?

- A press release is a written statement to the media. It is a product written in the third person that seeks to demonstrate to media personnel the newsworthiness of your published paper.

- The media are more likely to consider doing a story idea if they first receive a press release.

- It is a fundamental tool of public relations work.

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# Step 1 in Writing a Press Release

**WRITE THE HEADLINE.**

It should be brief, clear and to the point: an ultra-compact version of the press release's key point.
Public relations

# Writing the Headline – A Headline Has 4 Functions

- Gets attention.

- Suggests a reader audience.

- Delivers a complete message.

- Draws the reader into the body copy.

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# Step 2 in Writing a Press Release

**Write the body copy**.

The press release should be written as you want it to appear in a news story. Because media people are busy and may not have time to research your announcement, much of what you write for your press release is what the media may use in their write-up of your research.

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# What should appear in the body?

- Start with the date and city in which the press release originates.

- If your institution or organization has a media or public relations unit, the people who work there will be of great assistance; however, you can help them by providing some key facts.

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# What should appear in the body?

- The lead, or first sentence, should interest the reader and say concisely what the research study found.

- The next 1-2 sentences should then expand upon the lead, thereby filling in some details.

# What else should characterize the body?

- The press release body copy should be compact.

- Avoid using long sentences and paragraphs

- Avoid repetition and use of technical language and jargon

- Strive for simplicity with no wasted words

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# Step 3 in Writing a Press Release

**Communicate the "5 Ws" (and the H) clearly.**

- Who, what when, where, why – and how – should tell the reader everything they need to know.

- *Who* did the research (eg, leader researcher or research team). *What* was found? *When* was the research carried out? *Where* was the research carried out (ie, institution)? *Why* is this research important? *How* can people find out more?

- A quote from the lead researcher may add context to the findings

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# Other Keys to the Press Release

- Keep it short and to the point. The length of a press release should be limited to ~ 500 words of single-spaced text of 10-12 point font.

- If sending hard copy, the text should be double-spaced.

- The more newsworthy the press release copy, the better the chances of it being selected by media for wider dissemination.

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