



# the press release: how to -

The tried-and-true method of alerting reporters to events is the Press Release. When writing a press release, remember the following basic rules:

- |                          |                            |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| Use short sentences      | Use short first paragraphs |
| Use descriptive language | Highlight the positives    |
| Include the 5 Ws and H   |                            |

When you are ready to write the release, consider the following "rules"

- Always type ( double space if space allows)
- Keep to no more than 2 pages - one is preferred. If you use more than one page, put - MORE - at the bottom of the first page to alert the reporter that another page is coming
- Use 8 1/2 x 11 paper
- Leave ample margins (about 1 inch)
- At the top of the first page, put the name of the school, address, phone number and contact person and the date the release was sent

When it comes to the content of the release, here are a few suggestions:

- Decide the best way to introduce the story - the first paragraph should "hook" your reader. If your event is unique, stress that.
- Be accurate and objective - avoid opinionated statements.
- Try to answer as many questions as you might ask in the role of a reporter.
- Use "everyday" language - avoid bureaucratic jargon. Use proper grammar.
- Be as brief as possible, but make sure to cover the important facts.
- Double-check the spelling of names and all phone numbers listed.
- Proofread, proofread, proofread. Have someone else edit your work.
- Type -30- or -end- or ### at the bottom of the last page.
- If the story is really important, call ahead and tell the reporter the release is on the way. Then follow up with another call.
- Give as much advance notice as possible - about two weeks is best.
- Resend a "reminder" the week-of the event.

Remember, your press release is competing with many others for the reporter's time. Use your imagination and be creative.