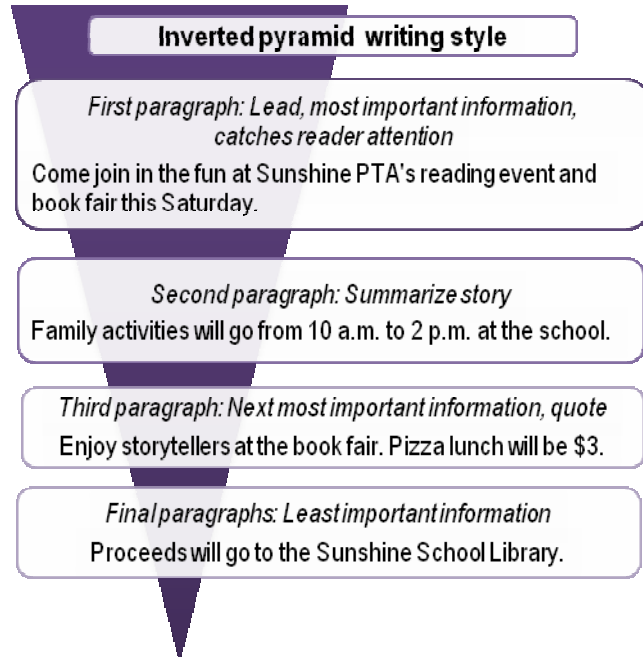


## Write for PTA publications: Use the inverted pyramid style

Writing stories is easy. Just answer these six questions: Who, What, When, Where, Why and How. The trick is arranging the responses in the right order. When the inverted pyramid writing style is used, publication editors can edit articles from the bottom up according to space requirements, preserving the critical points of your story. Readers appreciate the quick, readable structure that is familiar to them.

<b><i>How we were taught to write.</i></b>	
The Sunshine PTA fundraiser will raise money for the school	<i>premise or introduction</i>
It will be Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Sunshine School.	<i>support</i>
There will be food, fun activities for families and a book fair.	<i>support</i>
Storytellers will read children books while parents shop at the book fair.	<i>support</i>
Proceeds will go to the school library.	<i>support</i>
Please come to the Sunshine PTA fundraiser.	<i>conclusion</i>



Then refine your work. Use these tips.

<b>Editing Checklist</b>	<b>Mechanics Checklist</b>
<p><b>Does any information need to be added?</b> Is there a lead sentence that hooks the reader? Do any important details need to be added? Are contact names, e-mails or phone numbers important? Can a local, regional or state perspective to the story be added?</p> <p><b>Does any information need to be cut?</b> Are any unnecessary details included? Is anything repeated in the story? Are any unnecessary adjectives or adverbs used? Is this information important for readers?</p> <p><b>Do any parts need to be rewritten?</b> Are there ideas or parts that are confusing? Have any weak verbs (be, is, have) been used that could be replaced with more active ones? Are all acronyms spelled out on first use? Is wordy language used that can be concisely rewritten?</p> <p><b>Do any parts of the story need to be reorganized?</b> Is the most important information presented first? Is the information well-ordered and easy to read?</p>	<p><b>Sentence Structure</b> Are the sentences concise and clear? Are the sentences direct and to the point? Was the passive voice avoided?</p> <p><b>Punctuation</b> Does each sentence end with a punctuation mark? Are commas used in a series? (Dick, Jane, John and the principal) Are commas placed before connecting words in compound sentences? (and, but, or) Are quotations punctuated correctly?</p> <p><b>Capitalization</b> Does every sentence begin with a capital letter? Was the <i>PTA Style Guide</i> used to check the names of specific titles, publications and locations? Is capitalization consistent throughout the story?</p> <p><b>Grammar</b> Are singular verbs used to modify singular nouns, plural verbs for plural nouns? Is the use of prepositions to end a sentence avoided? (in, out, on) Do all quotations and parentheses open and close?</p>

Adapted, with permission, from *Communications With Impact*, California School Employees Association.