

The first sentence in a news story is called the Lead. This is the most important fact of the story.

## Sample Journalistic Writing

Jackson residents overwhelmingly elected Matthew George their 45<sup>th</sup> mayor Tuesday, beating out incumbent Earl Hastings by more than 18,000 votes.

“This is a dream come true,” George said at his victory party from the King Edward Hotel.

“When we weren’t victorious last time, we refused to give up. Today, we rejoice and look forward to a new era.”

Readers want to hear from sources. This quote adds color and emotion. It also transitions to the next paragraph.

Statistics are important to a story because they illustrate why it is important, and why readers should care.

According to poll results, George earned 55 percent of the vote, followed by Marvin Lewis with 25 percent, and Charles Calhoun with 10 percent. Hastings placed fourth, with just 5 percent, the lowest vote of any incumbent in the city’s history.

This source shows another side of the story, creating balance and fairness.

“It just didn’t work out for us this time, and the people have spoken,” said Hastings, whose term has been plagued by allegations that he misused city funds for personal gain.

Although voter turnout represented only 30 percent of the population, those who showed up at the polls demonstrated they wanted change.

This paragraph functions as a transition, while adding additional relevance through statistics.

“Enough is enough,” said Regina Coney. “We’ve put up with the mayor’s scandalous behavior for four years too long. He’s a distraction preventing us from moving forward.”

George, an attorney, says he will immediately begin the process of closing his firm to ensure the city has his undivided attention when he takes office on June 10. He said he previously considered keeping the firm open under the management of other associates, but decided against it.

This source adds yet another perspective to the story – readers want to hear from real people like them, not just public figures.

As the story winds down, this paragraph adds details that are relevant to the story.

“Unlike with other elected officials, I didn’t want there to be any sense of unethical behavior on my part, or that my firm was benefiting from my role as mayor,” he explained.

Ward 3 City Councilman John Locke said that while he supported Lewis in the campaign, he looks forward to working with George and thinks his decision is in everyone’s best interest.

“We need this new mayor to be 100 percent focused on running the city.”

This source adds yet another perspective to the story, someone who didn’t vote for the new mayor. This adds more balance and fairness.

Stories can end in a number of ways. One good way to end them is with a quote. However, it’s important that you don’t save your best or most important quotes for last because story endings sometimes get cut because of space restrictions.

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