

Feature Article

Assignment

Your assignment is to write an article that features a character from the novel *Animal Farm* and the historical counterpart of that character. The historical figure could be someone who was involved in the Russian Revolution or a more contemporary figure who shares many of the same characteristics with your chosen novel character. You must use detailed information from the novel to create a profile of your chosen character. Use information from your research to profile your character's counterpart in history.



Procedure

1. Choose a character from *Animal Farm*.
2. Determine which historical figure is most like that character.
3. Research your historical figure.
4. List personal characteristics that are similar for the character and historical figure.
5. List detailed examples from *Animal Farm* that illustrate those personality traits for your character.
6. List details from history that illustrate your historical figure's character.
7. Find quotes for your characters and your historical figure that demonstrate their common characteristics.
8. Write your feature article.

Requirements

1. Headline
2. Byline
3. Detailed facts about both the character from *Animal Farm* and its historical counterpart. Research is evident.
4. At least two relevant quotations, one for each subject of the article.
5. Significant conclusions about the relationship between both subjects.
6. Attention-getting introduction (See "How to Start a Feature Article.")
7. A satisfying conclusion (See "How to End a Feature Article.")



Leaders Must Lead or Be Led

By Marshall Arte

Czar Nicholas II, by his own admission, knew “nothing of the business of ruling.” And thus, it was no surprise he was relieved of his ruling duties. A leader must lead, or he will be led by others to the door.

Though not a fine leader, Czar Nicholas was once upon a time a fine man, fighting on the front during World War I. He thought he was proving himself, fighting for a cause and representing his country well. Unfortunately, this act of representation was distant and took him away from his country. As such, he relied on others to maintain the order and care for his citizens. His trusted ‘hand’ Rasputin proved incapable as, it would seem, did Czar Nicholas.

The seeming apathy toward Czar Nicholas’ trusting subjects generated question, distrust and

eventually outrage in Russia. And none the wiser, when the misguided leader returned to his domain, he found unrest and unruly subjects and was ousted out of power in favor of a party who spoke of a better life in which all people would be cared and provided for. And so the Russian Revolution of 1917 began and Czar Nicholas was forced to abdicate his throne in the dawning of Communism.

On a quaint farm on the England countryside, another revolution is dawning. At first glance Mr. Jones may appear to be an everyday rural farmer who made the one mistake of drinking too much and losing control of his animals. After all, by most accounts he was a capable, even generous, farmer who had just recently fallen upon bad luck. Upon a closer

look, however, we can see he was not just a farmer, but a leader. And as a leader, he misdirected his attention, underestimated the power of those he neglected, and lost control. Like Czar Nicholas, Mr. Jones relied on his hired hands to maintain the farm and care for the animals...they just weren’t up to the task and proved uncaring, leaving the animals unfed. Angry at their maltreatment, the animals revolted, literally running Mr. Jones off of his farm and claiming it for their own. And so Mr. Jones was forced to abdicate the throne of his domain in the dawning of Animalism. We are only left to hope Mr. Jones fares better in the coming months than Czar Nicholas, who, along with his family, was executed.

World War I Document Archive.
Brigham Young University Library.
January 2004.

How to Start a Feature Story or News Article

Question Lead

A question (it can be a series of questions) that is related to the main topic of the article is used to arouse the readers’ interest in the piece.

Example:

What really happened to the Titanic? What untold stories remain buried with the Titanic?
(Lead for a feature article on the Titanic)

Direct Address Lead

A question or a sentence is addressed to the reader as if the writer were directly talking to him to encourage him to read and react to the whole article.

Example:

Are you losing sleep over uncollected debts? It’s time you collect!
(Lead for a piece about collecting payments)

News Summary Lead

The article begins with a brief recount of a news item.

Example:

For six agonizing minutes on July 16 1991, a horrifying 7.5 magnitude earthquake shook the mountain city of Baguio, Philippines.

(Lead for a personal account of a survivor of that earthquake)

Incident Lead

This lead cites an incident to introduce the topic of the article. The incident may be real or fictitious, unlike the news summary lead which should be factual.

Example:

Susan watched in horror as her four-year old son dashed to the street after his rubber ball. In an instant, everything was over! Her son lay in a pool of blood!

(Lead for a piece on child safety tips)

Sentence Lead

A sentence or series of sentences introduces the topic of the article.

Example:

If garlic is "Nature's Antibiotic," then onion is "The Third Ingredient."

(Lead for a feature on the medicinal uses of onion and garlic)

Historical or Literary Allusion Lead

An allusion is made to a historical event or literary phrase to arouse curiosity on the content of the piece.

Example:

If a face can launch a thousand ships, then a loving wife can make a thousand ships sail for home.

(Lead for an article on keeping a husband satisfied)

Quotation Lead

A quotation is used to introduce the topic or arouse the interest of the reader. The person quoted may or may not be a celebrity, although a celebrity's words have of course, more weight.

Example:

"Why me?"

(A simple street vendor asks the writer when he is informed that he will be interviewed for a human interest feature. His question was used by the writer to start his piece.)

Descriptive Lead

This type of lead uses vivid description to hook the reader to finish the article. This type is best used for travelogues and personality sketches.

Example:

The chapel is like no other. Paintings of angels come alive from the majestic ceiling. The stained windows look like rainbows against the morning sunlight. To the left are statues of saints. They seem so real, you can almost feel them breathing.

Punch Lead

A short sentence that is set apart as a paragraph. It is dramatic way to introduce the topic of the article.

Example:

Let God and let go!

(Lead for a piece about faith)

Staccato Lead

This type uses a series of phrases or sentences that produce a rhythm. It is another dramatic way of introducing the topic of the feature article.

Example:

Call it infatuation. Obsession. Illusion. Call it a dream, a nightmare, but call it love!
(Lead for an article about teenage love)

There are many more ways to begin a feature article. And then again, two or more types of leads may be combined to produce an irresistible introduction to a masterpiece. Just remember to match the tone of the article and to suit the taste of the target readers.

Copyright © 2004 Lizzie R. Santos

How to End a Feature Story or News Article

Summary

A summary ending summarizes the points made in the story. It usually keys on impact, effects or outcome.

Tie Back

A tie-back ending plants a fact, idea or scene in the lead and completes it at the end.

Wrap-Up

A wrap-up ending ties up loose ends, answers questions or solves problems posed in the lead.

Climax

A climax ending provides a natural ending to a story told in chronological order.

Unending

An unending ending leaves a key question unanswered. It is used to stimulate reader thinking -- to get the reader involved with the situation posed in the story.

Stinger

A stinger ending is a surprise ending designed to jolt the reader.

Combination

A combination ending combines two or more of the above.

Use the table below to help organize your research and ideas for the feature article

Character: Example from book that illustrates trait	Similar Character Trait	Historical Counterpart: Example from history that illustrates trait

Feature Story Rubric

- 6 The story gives complete, detailed facts about both the character in the novel and the person/people in history, providing extensive and compelling evidence as well as meaning. Research and relevant quotes are used effectively to relay information and draw significant conclusions about the relationship between both subjects. Organization is balanced, unified and logical, and uses effective transitions. Language use is fluent with well-controlled sentences, clear and effective ideas, and precise word choice consistent with newspaper writing. While there may be a few errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics, an outstanding command of language is apparent.
- 5 The story gives complete facts about both the character in the novel and the person/people in history, providing moderate and relevant evidence as well as meaning. Research and/or relevant quotes are used effectively to relay information and draw meaningful conclusions about the relationship between both subjects. Organization is balanced, unified and coherent, and transitions are used. Sentences are almost always well controlled, expression of ideas is usually clear, and word choice is often precise. While there may be a few errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics, a good command of language is apparent.
- 4 The story gives many facts about both the character in the novel and the person/people in history, providing some evidence and some meaning. Research and/or quotes are used, but may not clearly express information or draw conclusions about the relationship between both subjects. Organization is generally clear. Sentences are usually well controlled, expression of ideas is usually clear, and word choice is appropriate for the topic. A competency with language is apparent, even though there may be some errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics.
- 3 The story attempts to give facts about both the character in the novel and the person/people in history but provides little evidence and lacks meaning. Research and quotes are used, but may not effectively express information. Few conclusions are drawn based on the facts. Organization is clear enough to follow without difficulty. Sentences are usually well controlled, expression of ideas is at times awkward or unclear, and word choice may at times be inaccurate or inappropriate. A basic control of language is apparent, even though there may be frequent errors in grammar, usage, or mechanics.
- 2 The story shows significant problems in one or more areas. Either the character in the novel or the person/people in history may not be presented. Research and/or quotes are not effectively used or do not appear at all. It may relay information, but support may be minimal or irrelevant with no clear meaning. Organization may lack clear movement or focus, making the writer's ideas difficult to follow. Sentences may often be unclear, expression of ideas may often be awkward or unclear, and word choice may often be inaccurate or inappropriate. Numerous errors in grammar, usage, or mechanics show poor control of language and may at times impede understanding.
- 1 The story has severe problems in one or more areas. The writer may not present either the character in the novel or the person/people in history clearly. Research and/or quotes are not used to express information, and no conclusions are drawn. Problems with organization and lack of focus may make the article very difficult to follow. Sentences may seldom convey meaning clearly, expression of ideas may be very unclear and confusing, and word choice may often be inaccurate or inappropriate. Severe problems with grammar, usage, or mechanics show very poor control of language and may significantly impede understanding.