

Sports Journalism Skill Module

The Preview/Advance Story

STUDENT OBJECTIVES

- Understand the conventions of a preview/advance sports story
- Use understanding of these conventions to write better preview/advance stories

RESOURCES AND PREPARATION

- *You Try It!* Student Worksheet – The Preview/Advance Story: It’s All In the Background

Additional Online Support:

- www.holtmcdougal.hmhco.com
- www.BlueNoseEd.com

Teach the Skill

1. Introduce the Preview/Advance Story: The preview or advance story is a sports story that appears *before* a sporting event. Tell the students that preview stories are written with two intentions: 1) to inform fans about the main factors that will have an impact upon the upcoming event, and 2) to build excitement about the event.

2. Teach the Preview/Advance Story:

- Tell the students that sports writing, in contrast to news writing, allows for a certain degree of freedom. But people still approach a preview/advance story with specific expectations. Namely, they want to learn the things listed in the left hand column of the table below. Write the table on the board. Based upon the examples in the right hand column, have student volunteers write sentences that fulfill the conventions of preview/advance story.

EXAMPLE

The Preview/Advance Story	
Expectation	Example
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where and when the game or match will take place 	<p>“The Davidson Football Bulldogs will clash with the Fighting Weasels of Sturnbridge High School in a non-conference game at 7:44 P.M., Friday, November 13, at B.B. Foster Field in Sturnbridge.”</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Records of teams 	<p>“Davidson is 1-2 on the season, while Sturnbridge enters the game with a gaudy 4-0 record.”</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statistics of key players 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of how the season is going for both teams 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct quotations from coaches and/or players about the upcoming game 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of key players: who is injured, and/or whose performance will be vital 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of the game for each team’s chances for playoffs or championships 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion of the mood and atmosphere surrounding the game 	

- A term the students should learn is **backgrounding**. This term describes what the students should do for a preview/advance story. Backgrounding requires legwork. It requires the students to talk to the coaches of both teams, to talk to players and fans, and to acquire accurate statistics from the

athletic departments of schools. To get the students thinking about how to background a preview story, lead them through the following exercise.

EXAMPLE

Backgrounding	
What Do You Need for a Preview Story?	Where Do You Get It?
Accurate Statistics	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sports Information Office 2. Coaches 3. Sports Conferences or Other Governing Bodies
Quotations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Quotations from Coaches 2. 3.
Appraisal of the Mood or Atmosphere Surrounding a Game	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3.
Predictions of Players' Anticipated Performances/What Fans Should Expect	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3.

4. **Apply the Skill:** Hand out copies of the You Try It! Worksheet, "The Preview/Advance Story: It's All In the Background." After reading the directions, have the students work in small groups to get started on a preview/advance story.

QUICK SKILLS CHECK Ask students to tell you the two main functions of a preview/advance story. Then have them tell you at least five of the expectations that readers need to have fulfilled in such a story.

YOU TRY IT!

The Preview/Advance Story: It's All In the Background

GOAL

A good preview/advance story digs into the personalities and vital statistics surrounding an upcoming athletic event to help fans understand what exactly is at stake. As you compete in the Blue Nose Sportswriting Contest, your awareness of what readers want in a preview story will help you write the most exciting story possible.

DIRECTIONS

What sporting events are coming up at your school? Choose one, and work through the chart below. Use what you already know, and make plans to find out what you need to know, to get started on a satisfying and intriguing preview/advance story!

Upcoming Sports Event: _____.
<i>1. Time and Place of Event:</i>
<i>2. Records of Participating Teams, and Overview of How Season Is Going So Far:</i>
<i>3. List of Key Statistics to be Used in Story:</i>
<i>4. Coaches, Players, and Fans to Be Contacted for Quotations:</i>
<i>5. Importance of Game/Match for Success of Season:</i>
<i>6. Description of Atmosphere Surrounding Upcoming Event:</i>

Self-Check

A good preview/advance story gives the reader a good grasp of what to expect in the coming contest. Look back over what you have written. Do you have a good start on a preview story? Now, go out and get the rest of the information you need to make the story come alive!