



Guidelines for Intermediate Section

- Interview at least one person for your story.
- Use a personal story to explore an issue.

People's stories are more interesting than lists of facts and figures.

- Use your own language and ideas. Don't imitate another writer's style.
- Start with a strong paragraph that encourages the reader to keep reading.
- Entries will be judged on their content and writing.

Do not try to make your story look like a newspaper or magazine article.

- Avoid using illustrations, photos, borders, colours or fancy fonts, more than one column or landscape layout.
- Entries to be typed, single or double-spaced. Preferred font is Times 12 point
- At the end of your article, note the person/people you interviewed for your story.
- Acknowledge the sources of additional information in a bibliography of books, articles or internet resources.
- Keep within the word limit. Entries must not exceed 700 words (16 and over section), 500 words (13 to 15 section), and 350 words (12 and under).



Guidelines for Junior section

Judges look for careful writing and an interesting personal story that explores ideas.

Interview at least one person whose story inspires you.

Include what this person's story can teach us about a specific issue.

Open with an interesting paragraph and end with a good conclusion.

Write in your own words and your own personal style.

Quote some sentences from the person you interview.

At the end of your story add a note about the person you interviewed.

Judges' Criteria

- A good title
- Audience appeal
- Writer's engagement with the topic
- Use of 'own' way of speaking
- Sense of the writer's voice behind the words
- Use of quotations
- Evidence of research or interview
- Fit with style and content of *Australian Catholics*



Tips for students

Here are some tips to help you in writing your article for the *Australian Catholics* Young Journalist Award.

The type of writing

Your article should be based on an interview with at least one person. You may include information from other sources. It will be helpful to study the style and content of articles in *Australian Catholics* before you commence.

The purpose of the writing

Keep in mind that your main purpose is to interest readers by telling them about an interesting person.

It is most likely you will have additional purposes such as: to entertain, to amuse, to give information, to stimulate discussion, or to show a different side of an issue or topic.

Being confident in your purpose will help you conduct your research, write the questions for an interview and decide on the tone of the writing.

Research

The more you know in advance about the topic and the person you plan to interview the better the interview and the article will be. Find out all you can from the internet and other sources.



Interviews

Questions for an interview

Work out questions that:

- show you know something about the topic
- are short and to the point
- are most likely to head to answers relating to your purpose in writing the profile
- are open-ended, allowing the interviewee to offer information you might not have thought to ask about
- are not likely to lead to 'yes/no' answers
- do not suggest the answer within the question



Conducting the interview

Decide on the purpose of the interview.

Prepare your questions.

Prepare for the interview:

- will it be in person or over the telephone?
- will you write down the person's answers or tape them?
- have you noted the date, time and place of the interview?

If you wish to use a tape recorder:

- ask permission first and use an unobtrusive recorder if possible
- check if the recorder is working and check the batteries
- practise using the recorder
- afterwards, check the recording and add to your notes while details are fresh in your mind.



Writing your article

The style

A profile is a word-picture of a person, usually written after an interview with the journalist. It combines facts, the writer's ideas about the person and the person's own words which are used to make or illustrate a point.

The length

Generally only a small part of the material from the interview appears in print. This allows you to structure the profile well by leaving out irrelevant material and overly wordy expression.

The writing process

Make a plan. What is the main thing you are trying to convey in the article? What examples best highlight this?

Arrange your material in a way that is logical for the topic: for instance, in order of time, place, people involved, causes and effects, problems and solutions.

Choose quotations which strengthen your point or reinforce the main idea.

Select enough material from your interview for the planned article.

Write your first draft.

Write in your own style. Don't try to imitate someone else's style.

Reread the draft carefully and remove padding and repetition.

Prepare a finished draft of the article and check it carefully before submitting it.



Final points

- Keep in mind these qualities of good writing:
- Accuracy
- Clarity
- Conciseness
- Connectedness
- Relevance
- Simplicity
- Style