

Writing a feature for OSCE website

CHECKLIST

- Title
- Tell a story – it's not a project report
- Use real-life examples and quotes
- Keep the feature between 1000–1500 words
- Language: simple and engaging
- Photos

Title: Make sure it is catchy and gives a good indication on what the feature is about. It should grab the readers' attention quickly so they'll keep reading. It needs to highlight the general topic of the story. If you're featuring a person, don't just use their name as the headline. Include a unique detail that will be uncovered as they read on. For example:

[Judy Smith: The woman who brought water to a thirsty village.](#)

- **Tell a story – it's not a project report:** A frequent mistake with some submissions is that people sometimes cut and paste project information as if the feature is a highlight of a report. It is not: it should tell a story, with an engaging beginning, middle and end – problem, solution and outcome, supported by quotes, and real-life examples. Make sure your opening paragraph grabs the reader's attention and makes them want to read on. Other types of features can be a 'day-in-the-life' piece of an OSCE staff member to give a grassroots feel of the practical realities of working on the ground. If you want to publish a feature to coincide with a particular event, get in touch with us early on. We can work on the planning with you.
- **Use real-life examples and quotes:** These are essential to bring the piece to life. Try to use a range of examples and quotes from different people to introduce different voices and perspectives. Also, substantiate general points with hard data to give your piece credibility and authority.
- **Keep the feature between 1000–1500 words:** You can go beyond this limit but it can be difficult to sustain the reader's interest. COMMS will help you with the editing and revision process.
- **Language: simple and engaging:** Use interesting and descriptive language. Can be a more relaxed tone; use anecdotes to engage the reader.
- **Photos:** Photos can help make a story interesting and convey emotion and meaning. A good photo can add to a piece. Please note, any photos with persons on them need to have explicit permission to use. Any photo not owned/taken by the author of the feature needs to have copyright/permission to use and the photographer will need to be credited accordingly.

Structure

Introduction

The “hook”. It needs to draw readers into the story in the first paragraph.

The introduction should tell the reader why this story is important or worth their time, but with an angle. This is your last chance to “hook” a reader before they move on.

Be sure to keep your sentences short. Use this as an opportunity to say something attention-grabbing or something that’ll spark the reader’s interest. Always remember - the WHY is important. You establish the tone of your feature in the introduction.

Body

The body of the feature should be broken into sections with several headings for easy organization and reading.

This is where most of the details of the story are written. It includes names, places, times, and quotes related to the story. The opinions of the writer, those at the location of the story, and experts are presented in the body of the article. This is also the place to include any pictures that illustrate the story, as well as diagrams, charts, and other visual elements.

Conclusion

The conclusion should leave a lasting impression on the reader and provoke some sort of reaction.