

Sports Journalism Skill Module

The Game Story

STUDENT OBJECTIVES

- Understand the conventions and expectations of a game story
- Use your understanding of these conventions to write better stories about games and matches

RESOURCES AND PREPARATION

- *You Try It!* Student Worksheet – The Game Story: The Score and More

Additional Online Support:

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

Teach the Skill

1. Introduce the Game Story: Game stories are exactly that. They are stories that give blow-by-blow descriptions of a game. Tell students that game stories usually begin by describing the outcome of the game, and highlighting aspects of the game that had the greatest impact of on the outcome. After the climactic events have been described, the story moves through the game chronologically. Quotations from coaches and fans are included. Descriptions of the crowd and other points of atmosphere are also included. But the emphasis of a game story always remains on the game itself.

2. Teach the Game Story:

- Tell the students that game stories are the most straightforward stories in sports journalism. Readers want to know exactly how the game went, which plays were most important, and which players had the most impact. In a sense, the purpose of the game story is to re-live the game, and to provide an accurate record of what exactly happened. As the students write their game stories, remind them to:
 1. Open with a quick summary of the game’s outcome. If appropriate, mention here key plays or outstanding players.
 2. Include a chronological recap of the game’s scoring.
 3. Include key statistics, telling who scored the most points, and who otherwise made major contributions.
 4. Include quotations from coaches and players that help summarize how the game went.
 5. Include details from the game that give a sense of the game’s atmosphere. Was it a day game or a night game? Was the crowd big or small, rowdy or quiet?
 6. End with a brief preview of what is next for the teams or players involved.

EXAMPLE

A good way to help students become more familiar with the form of the game story is assign the class to watch or listen to a particular game—such as the Super Bowl, or a game of the World Series. The next day, print out from the internet various game stories that have been written about it, and compare them to each other in class. By reading several accounts of the same game, students will gain a better command of this key type of sportswriting.

- To help the students get into the rhythm of writing a game story, draw the following table on the board. Based upon the information provided in the left hand column, have student volunteers improvise/imagine a game story from scratch.

The Game Story	
What “Happened”	How It Goes Into A Story

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Football game, Friday, November 13, in Sturnbridge. • Davidson High beat Sturnbridge High, 34-7. • Joe Dawes of Davidson scored 4 TDs, gained 235 yards rushing. • One of Dawes' TDs was a 99-yard run, on the first offensive play of the game. • Sturnbridge had more total offense than Davidson, but also had 5 turnovers. • The second half of the game was played in dense fog. Neither team could see well enough to pass the ball. • Imagine quotations from coaches and players! • Make up other "facts" and "statistics" to make your game story read like the real thing! 	<p>In a surprising upset, the Davidson Football Bulldogs beat the Fighting Weasels of Sturnbridge High School, 34-7, in a non-conference game last Friday, November 13, at B.B. Foster Field in Sturnbridge. Joe Dawes, running back for the Bulldogs, scored four touchdowns, including a 99-yard run on the first play from scrimmage. . . .</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
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3. Apply the Skill: Hand out copies of the You Try It! Worksheet, "The Game Story: The Score and More." After reading the directions, have the students work individually to get started on a game story.

QUICK SKILLS CHECK Ask students to tell you the general form of a game story. What should go in the opening? What should follow that opening?

YOU TRY IT!

The Game Story: The Score and More

GOAL

People pick up a game story for an accurate recap of a recent contest. By capturing the excitement of a game, and providing a precise description of how the game was played, you can make your game story into a strong contender in the Blue Nose Sportswriting Contest.

DIRECTIONS

Choose a game or match that is being played at your school, in your city, or on television. As you watch the game, use the following chart to take notes. When the game is over, get directly or collect from TV some good quotations from the coaches and players involved, and use the information you have gathered to get started writing a game story!

Sports Event: _____.
Time and Place: _____.
Final Outcome: _____.
1. <i>List Here a Chronological Recap of the Scoring:</i>
2. <i>List the Plays and Players that Were Decisive in the Game's Outcome:</i>
3. <i>List Key Statistics from the Game:</i>
4. <i>List Quotations from Coaches, Players, and Fans that You Want to Use in Your Story:</i>
5. <i>Describe the Atmosphere of the Game, if it Had a Factor In the Outcome:</i>
5. <i>How Did this Game Affect the Seasons of Each Team?</i>

6. *Look Ahead—What Does Each Team Face Next?*

7. *Now, Write Your Opening Paragraph, Which Tells Us What Was Most Important About the Game:*

Self-Check

Look back at the information you have gathered for your game story. Do you have the facts and quotations that you will need to finish your story? Remember, a good game story requires that you methodically gather the information that people will want to know, and then present that information in an accurate and interesting fashion!