



The long form: why it is that interesting

- Donato Ramani and Nico Pitrelli

IR0000032 – ITINERIS, Italian Integrated Environmental Research Infrastructures System
(D.D. n. 130/2022 - CUP B53C22002150006) Funded by EU - Next Generation EU PNRR-
Mission 4 “Education and Research” - Component 2: “From research to business” - Investment
3.1: “Fund for the realisation of an integrated system of research and innovation infrastructures”



Long vs Short

LONG FORM

VS

**SHORT FORM
(NEWS)**

LONG FORM: in-depth analysis

SHORT FORM: straight to the point

Long form: a definition 1

“Long-form journalism refers to a genre of journalism characterized by **in-depth reporting and storytelling** that has more substantial content than the average news report.

These pieces often explore topics with **greater detail, context and narrative techniques**, blending factual reporting with literary elements such as character development, scene-setting and dialogue.”

By Wikipedia English

Long Form: a definition 2

“Because long-form journalism usually employs **stylistic and structural elements** often used in fiction, it is sometimes referred to as literary journalism or narrative journalism.

While traditionally associated with print newspaper articles, the digital revolution expanded the genre's reach to online magazines, newspapers and other digital platforms, which often use **a blend of multimedia to create an immersive reader experience**”.

Long form: a definition 1

- *The Atlantic Monthly*
- *The Economist*
- *The Nation*
- *The New Yorker*
- *The New York Times Magazine*
- *Harper's Magazine*
- *L'internazionale*



<https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2012/12/new-york-times-snow-fall-feature/320253/>

<https://www.nytimes.com/projects/2012/snow-fall/index.html#/?part=tunnel-creek>

Long Form: Main Characteristics

 Structure

 Length

 Style

 Voices

 Multimedia

VOICES

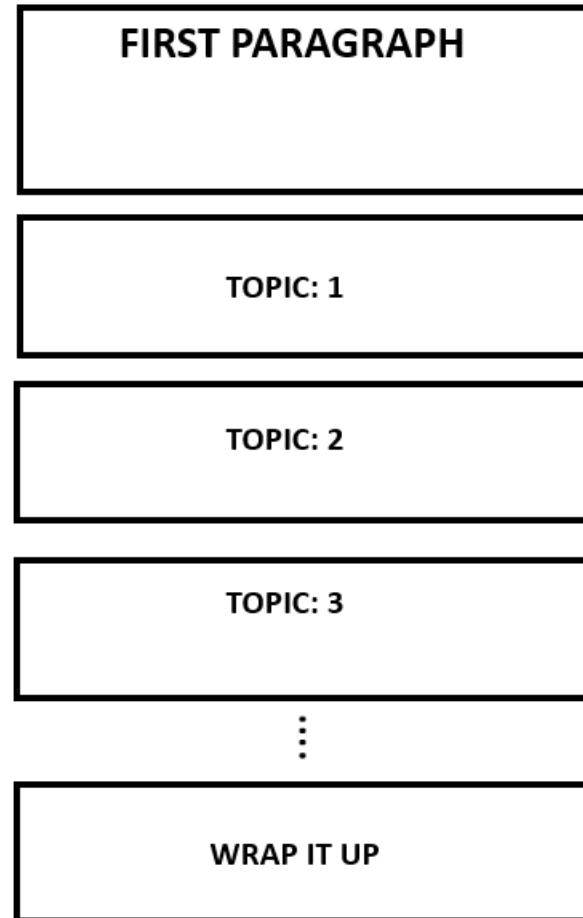
- They make it easier for you to understand the story
- They enrich the story with anecdotes and quotations
- They give rhythm to the text
- They facilitate both writing and reading
- They can increase its credibility
- They are a source of additional contacts, references, and multimedia materials

FIX YOUR «WORKING TITLE»

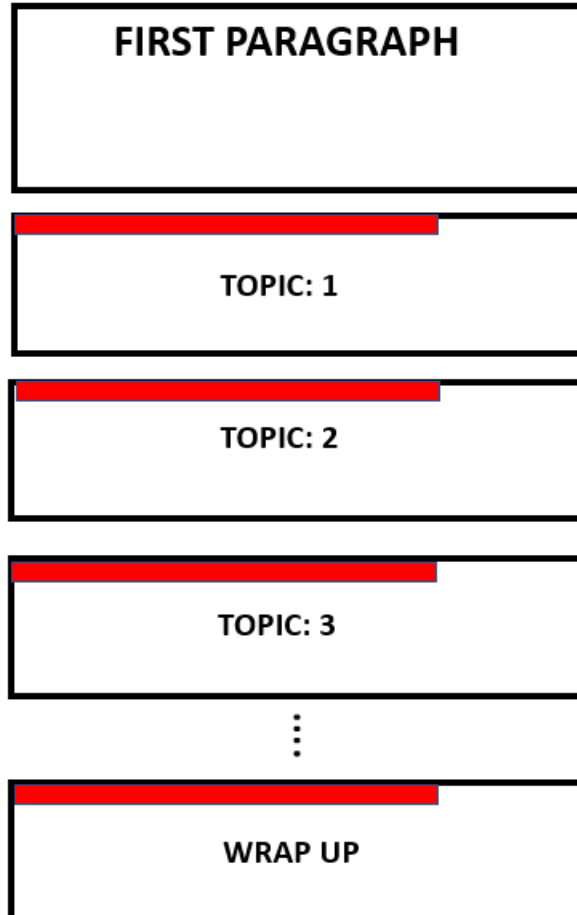
«Rem tene, verba sequentur»

HOW TO DO IT

PREPARE A DRAFT

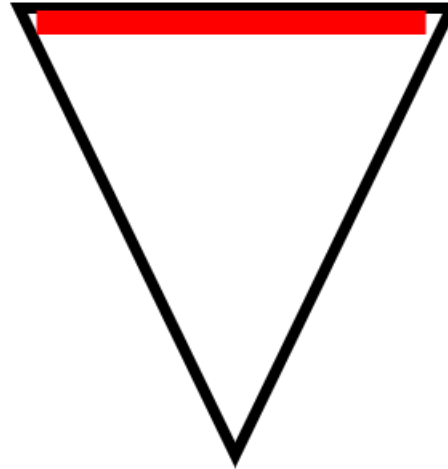


HOW TO DO IT

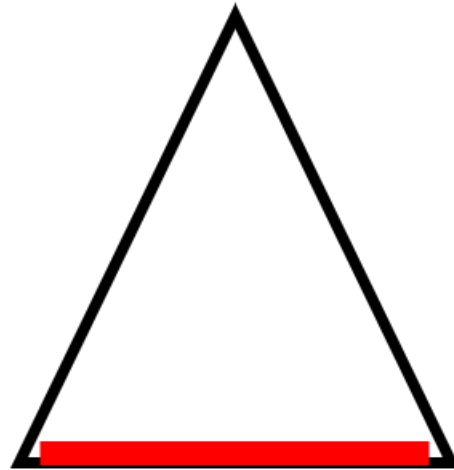


HOW TO DO IT

POINT FIRST PARAGRAPH



POINT LAST PARAGRAPH



THE IMPORTANCE OF STARTING A NEW PARAGRAPH

«Using **white space** helps the reader process the information in the story/work, **gives their eyes a break and keeps them interested**. Look at each page as if it were a work of art.

Some sentences will have more impact on their own.

Other sentences need more information and will evolve into a long paragraph of vital information. [...] **[K]eep in mind that the longer the paragraph, the more chance that someone will skip it**. Our eyes tend to naturally look for white space.

And the sentences closest to the white space are the ones most remembered»

By Cheryl Kaye Tardif

PARAGRAPHS

1. **Each paragraph is a unit of composition.** Don't start a new one if that's not appropriate.
2. Condense the focus of your communication in a topic sentence that makes a point, which the rest of the paragraph develops

HOW TO DO IT

THE FLOW



THE JANUS FUNCTIONS

Backward-looking and forward looking

THE UNBROKEN CHAIN



The exercise

**WATCH OUT FOR SUBORDINATE CLAUSES,
PUNCTUATION, AND OVERLY LONG SENTENCES.
THEY ARE HARD TO READ.**

Style

Written in the first person or third person?

Warmer or more neutral?

More descriptive or more informative?

Simple or difficult?

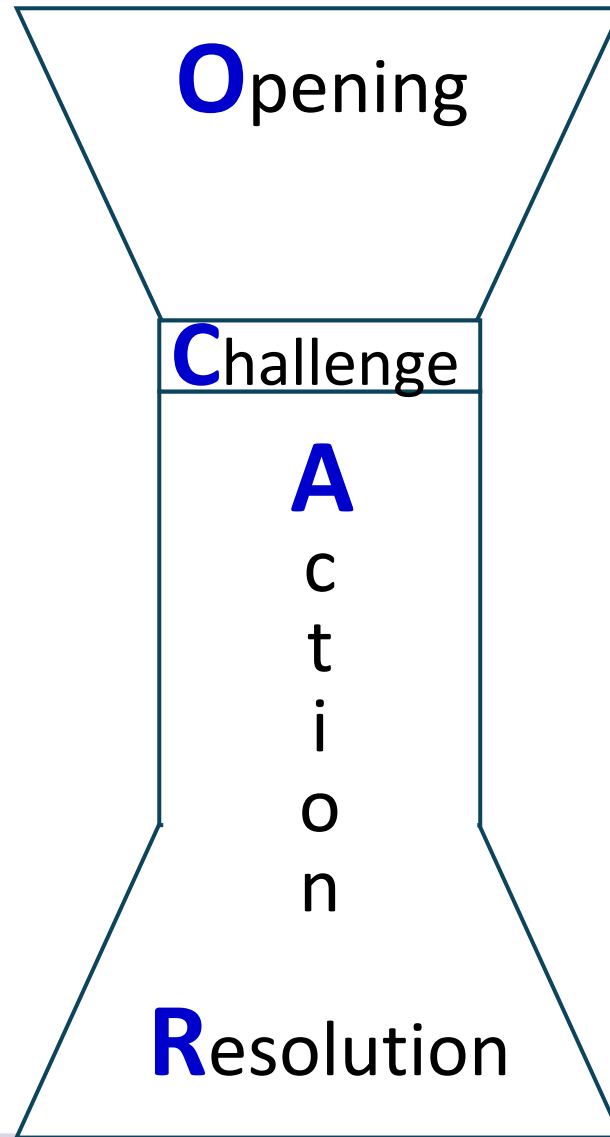
It's depend on the topic (and on you)

The title

It's much more like the title of a book

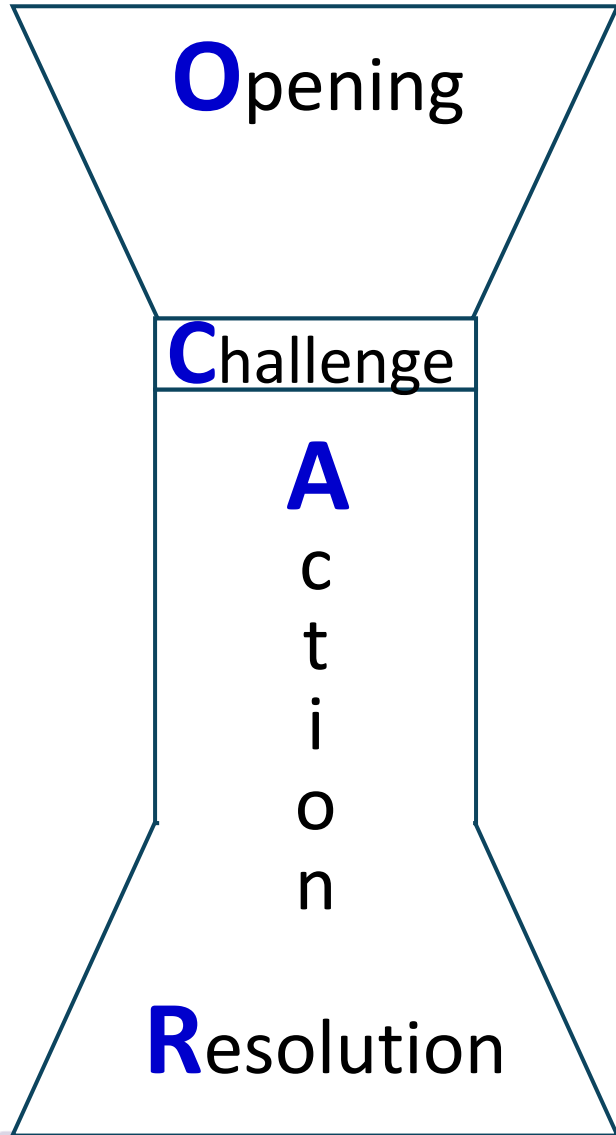
The hourglass structure

Long Form: Structure



The hourglass structure

Long Form: Structure

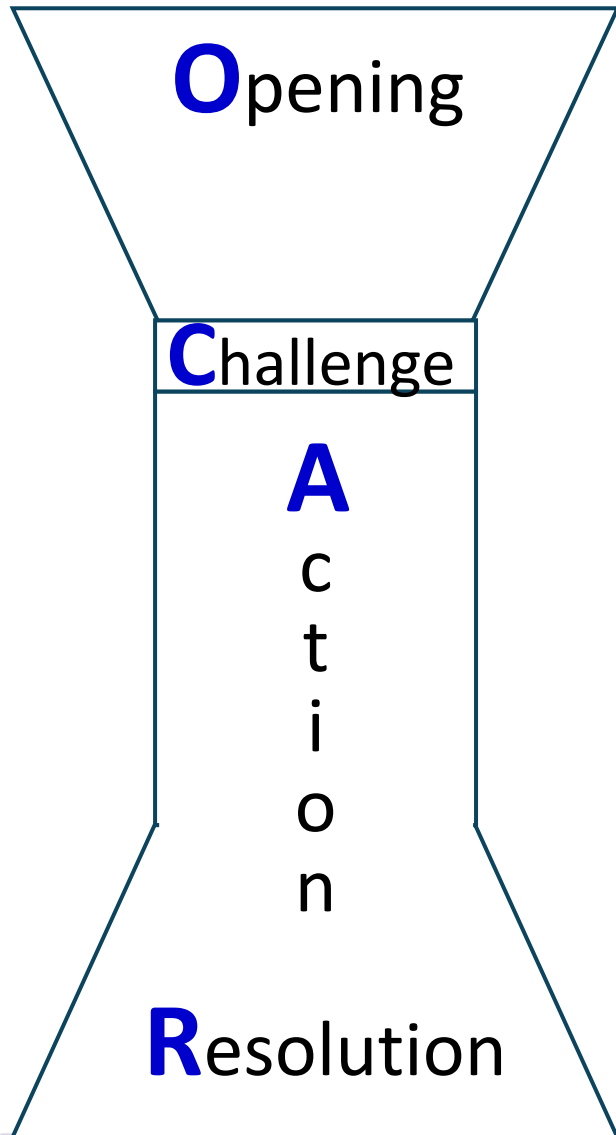


THE HOOK

THE QUESTION(S)

THE STUFF

TAKE HOME MESSAGES



THE HOOK

A story
A striking sentence
A description
Numbers, data, information
An “emotional” beginning
Or...

THE HOOK

A story

A striking sentence

A description

Numbers, data, information

An “emotional” beginning

Or...

Exercise 1

Search online for a long-form article and answer the following questions:

1. What is the topic
2. How is the title structured (evocative, descriptive, emotional, or something else)?
3. What kind of hook does it use?
4. Are there multimedia elements?
5. What writing style is used?
6. Are there other voices included, and if so, which ones?
7. How is the piece structured?

[RADAR Magazine | Storie di ambiente, natura, luoghi e culture](#)

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[Science · Longform](#)

The Electric Typewriter

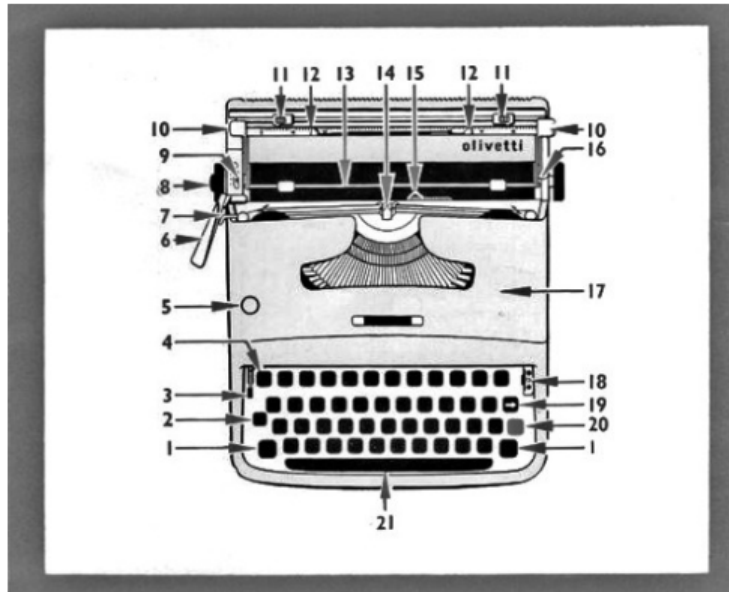
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6

5 Great Essays about Death

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How to Practice by Ann Patchett - I wanted to get rid of my possessions, because possessions stood between me and death

If My Dying Daughter Could Face Her Mortality, Why Couldn't the Rest of Us? by Sarah Wildman - She turned to me and asked, "What if this is the best I ever feel again?" Three hundred and seventy-six days later, she was dead.

Articles about Life
Articles about Death
Articles about Love

Articles about Science & Technology
Articles about the Environment
Essays about Climate Change
Articles about Language
Psychology Articles
History Essays

Articles about Computers
Essays about AI

Articles and Essays about Writing
Short Articles and Essays
Short Memoir Examples
True Crime Stories

Travel Articles
Music Articles
Sports Articles
Movie Articles
Food Articles

Joan Didion Essays
James Baldwin Essays
David Foster Wallace Essays
Hunter S. Thompson Articles
David Sedaris Essays
Zadie Smith Essays

The Electric Typewriter

Exercise 2

Think about a long form and:

Decide the Topic

Define the working title

Define a possible script

Choose a possible magazine



THANKS!

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