At a Glance: Organization Strategies

STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION	APPLICATION	ADVANTAGES / DISADVANTAGES
MARTINI GLASS	Consists of four segments: **1. Inverted pyramid.** A short inverted pyramid states the basic facts. **2. Transition.** A short transition at the bottom of the triangle explains why the story is important . **3. Recap.** Transition is followed by a retelling of the story in more detail. **4. The kicker.** A punchy or memorable ending that rewards the reader.	A versatile form for deadline and non-deadline writing. Most effective as a tool to retell or recap an event that has a clear chronological path.	Would not work well with a story that has multiple, distinct elements that need to be explained individually.
CLOCK	Tell the story chronologically. Choose a time frame within which the action occurs.	Can be used whenever you need to recount or reconstruct events chronologically.	Adaptable to many stories and writing assignments. Not effective in covering such things as government meetings or trials.
A DAY IN THE LIFE	Frequently used to give readers an inside look at an occupation or how something works.	Most often used for feature stories, usually with a focus on one person. Covers a specific time frame within a 24-hour period.	A good way to give readers a behind-the-scenes view. The reporter must pay close attention to the clock to mark events as they unfold.
THE VISIT	Frequently used for feature stories. Often focuses on a person of interest through news events, celebrities, or someone engaged in an interesting activity. The writer spends a specific amount of time with the subject.	Often used to tell a story about someone who has performed a heroic deed or has been singled out for intellectual, musical or athletic accomplishments.	"The Visit" gives a writer time alone with a subject away from competing reporters. Possible downside is that the subject is unresponsive or guarded.
PAST PRESENT FUTURE	Information is grouped into segments of past, present and future developments. Can re-arrange the time segments according to the best way for the story to unfold.	One of the most powerful of the Time tools. So versatile it can be used in almost any type of story.	Easy to distinguish the time frames in a story. Pay attention to verb tense so you don't mix the time segments. Would not be an effective strategy where the writer is giving a pure chronology of events.
BOXES	Key to successfully using this tool is to group similarly themed information into its own story segment or "box." The "boxes" of information can be moved around in a logical order.	Effective with complex stories that cover several topics. Can also be used for breaking news or features.	Can save time during reporting by inputting key information into each "box" as it is gathered.
QUESTIONS	Ask questions in one or more of these areas to identify the best story. **HOW**: How did this happen? **WHY:** What issues or factors produced this result? **NEXT:** What happens next? **ME:** Why is the story important to readers? **UNIQUE:** What makes it unusual? Like the "Boxes" technique, you decide the order of information.	Effective in writing about breaking news events that affect a large number of readers. Also useful in writing about the aftermath of events, or when you want to advance a continuing story.	Versatile because the information associated with each question can be moved around for best effect. Would not be effective as a tool to recount events in a chronological order.

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