



Press Releases

A press release is a tool used by organizations to disseminate relevant and newsworthy information to media outlets such as newspapers, magazines, television and radio stations. Press releases can serve a variety of purposes such as issuing a statement or taking a stand on a news development or issue; providing background information or supplementing late-breaking news; and announcing other news, such as the findings of a study, the results of a poll, recommendations in a report, or a special event.

What do you create?

Use the [Press Release Template](#) we have provided and the information below to send out a press release to various media outlets.

How many points can you earn?

100 points per school for writing a Press Release and an extra 10 points for every media outlet you send it to!

How do you earn points?

Upload and submit your press release to us using the The People Speak's online [Upload form](#).

We have provided you with a [template](#), but the following information will help you better understand the structure of a press release and how to best deliver them.

The Structure of a Press Release

Whenever you write for the media, it is important to follow the inverted pyramid format: put the most important news at the top and the less important details at the end. This format allows reporters to cut information from the bottom of the story. Use short sentences and paragraphs. Your release should be about one page in length.

The lead. The lead is the first one or two sentences of your news release. The lead should answer the most important questions about your story: the “who,” “what,” “when,” “where,” and “why.”

The second paragraph. Your second paragraph should amplify your lead, providing more information about the event or issue. Be sure to include the name of the organization issuing the release.

The third paragraph. The third paragraph of your release should be a quotation from someone close to the issue you're writing about. The quotation should reinforce a major point you are trying to make. Quotations should appear in the past tense.

Final paragraphs. The last paragraphs should appear in order of importance. Don't place information you hope to see appear in a reporter's story at the end of the release!

Boilerplate. Boilerplate text is information about the organization or individuals issuing the press release. Think of boilerplate as the information you would normally find in an “About Us” section of an organization's website. Boilerplate text should include the organization's full name and its mission. In your case, the boilerplate



might include the names of your team members and school and a sentence describing the Global Debates.

Writing Your Release

Using the structure above, create an outline for your release. What are you trying to accomplish with your press release?

Once you have your outline, stop for a moment and think about the press release from a reporter's point of view. Most stories that make it into the public eye have similar traits.

- **They present a new argument or idea.**

Media outlets are not interested in repeating information that has already been covered.

Climate change makes the news frequently. What do you have to say that hasn't been said already?

- **They address local issues.** Local outlets cover stories their readers are going to find interesting. Think about your climate change message. How does it apply to your community?

- **They affect a large number of people.** Another characteristic of "newsworthy" stories is the scale of the issue being addressed. The more people an issue involves or affects, the more likely a reporter will write a story about the issue.

- **They appeal to people's emotions.** Not all stories have to be what is considered "hard" news.

Human interest stories are the stories that people read and have a strong emotional reaction to, the stories make them happy or sad.

Once you've answered these questions for yourself and from the reporter's point of view, you're ready to write your release.

Sending Your Release

Once you've developed your release, you need to find media outlets and reporters to send it to. Keep in mind that smaller, local outlets are most likely

to incorporate information from your press release into a story. Look for local reporters who cover climate change or similar topics related to your efforts.

Different reporters prefer receiving press releases in different ways. Most prefer email, but some reporters still prefer to receive their releases via fax. Once you have sent your release, make follow-up calls to reporters, and use the opportunity to offer additional information and experts.