



## **BubbleLife Neighborhood Writing Guide**

# Writing Guide

With large local news outlets — newspapers, television and radio stations — rapidly cutting their operations, it's getting hard to find out what's going on around us. BubbleLife's mission is to reinvent neighborhood news by gathering articles and events from a variety of different sources. Then, we get that news to the community via our neighborhood websites, daily email newsletters, Twitter accounts and more.

**We want your news! - Everyone is welcome to contribute.**  
To find your neighborhood, visit [BubbleLife.com](https://BubbleLife.com)

## **BubbleLife brings together articles, events and photos from three sources:**

**Community contributions:** Within each neighborhood, everyone creates news. Whether you're a local resident, business, sports organization, PTA or community group, you've got a story to tell. Let us help you share it. Anyone can contribute — yes, even you!

**Original content:** Our neighborhood-focused reporters and regular bloggers find and write stories on interesting people and places often ignored by larger media.

**Third-party content:** The big city may contain eight million stories, but our neighborhood editors select only news from sources that are relevant, impactful and have news value for each neighborhood.



# Writing Guide

## Let us help you get your story approved.

This guide helps you understand how you can contribute and get your stories out to the neighborhood. BubbleLife editors moderate all stories. The only requirement for approval is that the neighborhood would want to read it. This guide will tell you how to always get your stories approved.

## Telling Your Story

Follow these tips when writing for your neighborhood:

### Don't be dull.

Write it in your own voice so that others would want to read it.

**Make it Newsworthy:** Give your story an angle. Got an event coming up? Don't just give readers the time and place — instead, add a story about the impact of last year's gathering and what you expect from this year's event.

**Use Your Voice:** Just writing facts and details in an article can be boring and uninteresting. Instead, use a conversational voice, like you're telling the information to a friend. After all, you are writing for your neighbors!

Mention people in your story. If you're a business, talk about a customer.

**Include Local People:** People love to read about local people and what they are doing in their community. Feature a member of your organization or team and relate to the human interest.

**Provide a Community Benefit:** How will your information be beneficial to the neighborhood? Articles that provide answers or fill community needs are a great fit for BubbleLife.

Readers love photos! The more the better.

**Add Good Photographs:** A good photograph gets your story read by more people because photos are memorable and engaging. Photographs should supplement an article's message. Photographs can be featured in two ways: embedded into an article or placed in a gallery at the end of an article.

**The bottom line: Make sure your story is something your neighbor would want to read.**

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## Best Practices

Not all articles are created the same. Some get read much more than others. Here are some best practices to get your story on the top of everyone's list.

**A good headline improves a story's chance of being read by over 500%.**

**Write Good Headlines:** Articles should have compelling headlines that attract attention, while conveying the general message of the story. As a rule of thumb, headlines should not be longer than 10 words. All of the words in a headline should be capitalized except for articles (a, an, the). **Examples of good headlines include:**

*"Pop Into the Soda Gallery in Oak Cliff to Find Your Favorite Vintage Sodas"*

*"I-635 Commuters Invited To LBJ/Skillman Urban Planning Initiative Meeting"*

*"Keller ISD Principal Receives National Honor for Technology Leadership"*

*"For the Homeless in Collin County, There is Room at the Samaritan Inn"*

*"LOST DOG: Have You Seen Angel in Allen?"*

**Add Interesting Content:** An article should not be a straightforward sales pitch. Instead, an article should present interesting and informational facts, which are relatable to your business or organization.

**Use Lists:** The use of a bulleted or numbered list in an article can help clearly convey your message. If you have a list of facts or steps to a process that you plan on incorporating in your article, try presenting that information in a list.

**Show Neighborhood Focus:** Some examples of typical neighborhood articles include profiles on interesting and important residents, features about local events, and stories about local government and school news. It is even appropriate to write business stories, such as when a new restaurant opens in the community or if a local business finds a way to give back through a donation or community service.

**Provide Information, Not PR:** Whether a business or a community group, we always to get our name out, but an article aimed solely at publicity doesn't make for an interesting read. Instead, keep the branding to a minimum and focus most on how your information will be of value to the neighborhood.

**Make it Easy to Read:** An article should have short paragraphs that are no longer than five lines. Each paragraph should have a clear idea and message.