Natural Hazards Research Australia

Writing for impact

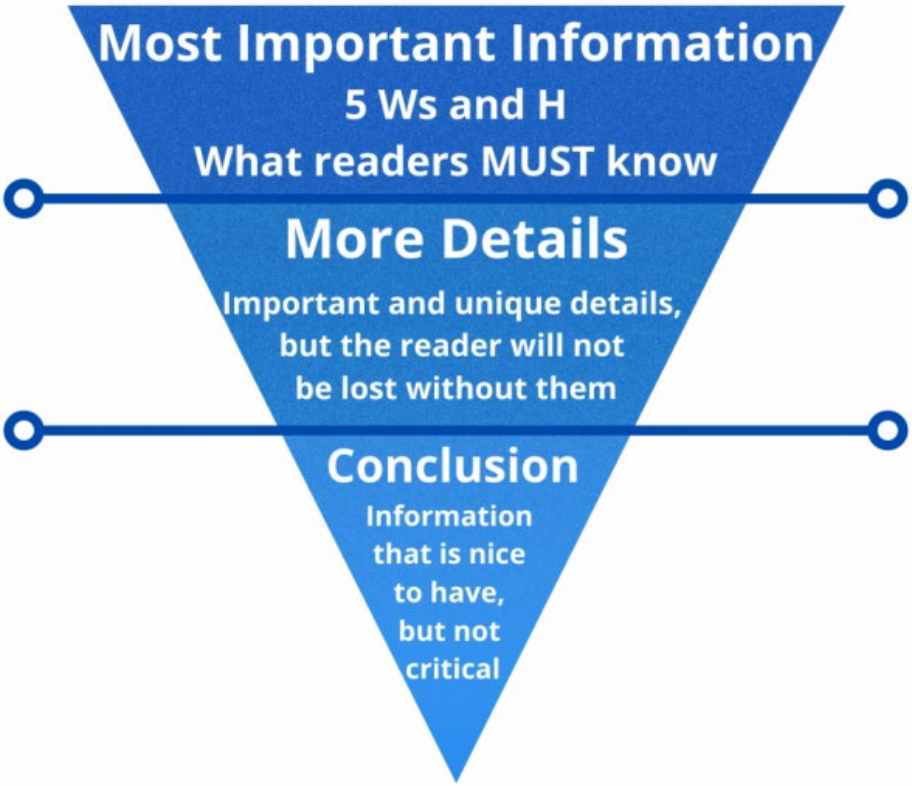
We need clear, factual science communication to help ensure people are informed to make good decisions for themselves and their loved ones.

Information platforms are overflowing with content – factual and sensationalist – getting people's attention and keeping it is getting increasingly difficult.

As a researcher, you are the expert on your field of study, however you are competing with misinformation, click bait and cute cat videos for screen and brain space.

You can improve your chances of grabbing the overstimulated attention of your audience by understanding your audience, tailoring your key messages and using different content formats – as well as understanding **writing for impact**.

Called the inverted pyramid, this structure is the opposite of academic writing. It places all the key information at the beginning of the piece so that the reader understands the main takeaways within the first three paragraphs. The five Ws and H to include are: who, what, when, where, why and how.



Example:
A new research project seeks to learn from the experiences of people affected by flooding in South Australia, Victoria and south-western New South Wales to gather vital insights about the information, communication and response in their local communities.

Conducted by Natural Hazards Research Australia in partnership with RMIT University, Macquarie University and Monash University, as well as South Australian SES, Victoria SES and New South Wales SES, researchers want to hear from anyone affected by the sudden-onset and longer lead time riverine flooding experienced by these areas between August 2022 and March 2023.

By sharing their stories through an online survey, the experiences of anyone affected will help emergency agencies to better understand the short-, mid- and long-term effects of these floods, as well as help inform how information about future floods is communicated.

Using this structure will help make sure that your time-poor readers will take away your key messages, even if they are unable to read the full text.

For more information or advice, visit www.naturalhazards.com.au or contact Natural Hazards Research Australia's communications team:

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