



Guide to form – Journalism

If I can write in any form, which should I choose? This is the question we are most often asked. There is no 'better' or 'worse' form but the brief notes below may help you decide.

Stop press. **Journalism** may connect with the reader by starting with an anecdote or specific story. What follows should be cross-referenced with some careful research so that the experience of one person illuminates big issues. It usually adopts a neutral tone; therefore, most journalism is third person, as in this piece by Rebecca Omonira, headlined Syrian refugees 'turned back from Greek border by police':

On the edge of Europe, where the river Evros meanders towards the Aegean sea, a new tragedy involving two of the world's most troubled peoples is unfolding.

On one side of the river border are gathered clusters of Syrian refugees, desperate to escape the misery of war and put the Turkish camps behind them. But beyond the perilous currents lies Greece, a nation so economically bereft it has little time or resources for them. [...]

This summer two people smugglers left 25 Syrian refugees to cross the Evros alone at night. There were two rubber dinghies. The first disappeared across the river into the night. The second floated towards Greece, developed a leak, spun for 15 minutes and then capsized. Most of the men, women and children could not swim.

But the same journalist may use first person approach to tell a different story, as in this piece about Rebecca's own volunteering, 'Could I become a lifeline?'

Could I really mentor a refugee? Having only recently qualified for a 'proper' profession myself, I began to feel I had little to offer a qualified doctor say, from the Congo perhaps, trying to find work in the UK.

I confessed to Emily. She remained positive and explained exactly what I could do to help. I began to realise that what I could offer was simple things like explaining work culture in the UK, the national obsession with drinking tea and how making endless cups of tea could do wonders for your popularity. And more seriously, where to go to get specialist work advice. Emma pointed out that the untapped resources I'd have as a UK resident over someone with no family, friends or work history in the UK. I know doctors and people training to be doctors. Of course. I got excited again.

Here's an extract from ['Mending the Safety Net'](#) by Ruby Alexander, from the OYP 2021:

Each year as the nights draw in, temperatures drop, and the glow of fairy lights on trees illuminates each window, 800,000 children across the country write a letter with their Christmas wishes and post it to the Royal Mail's special address: "Santa/Father Christmas, Santa's Grotto, Reindeerland XM4 5HQ". The magical land full of soft, powdery snow and populated by elves where these letters arrive is, in actuality, a sorting office in the urban centre of Belfast. This demonstrates that simply by changing a line in the Royal Mail's database, addresses do not have to function as destinations, but merely as routing instructions.



And here's what Ruby had to say about her article:

"Taking the time to research thoroughly made writing... an easier process because I really understood what I was writing about and was therefore able to focus on communicating the information and achieving the style of the essay I wanted."