

Comprehensive Study Guide: Writing a Feature Article (Magazine Style)

A feature article is your opportunity to inform, entertain, and engage readers on a particular topic. Unlike academic writing, it blends storytelling with facts and uses a conversational tone to capture the reader's interest. For the Leaving Certificate, this task requires creativity, a strong structure, and clear purpose.

What is a Feature Article?

A feature article is a polished piece of writing that explores a topic in depth while keeping the audience entertained. It often includes:

- **Engaging Content:** A mix of information, anecdotes, and opinions.
 - **A Clear Voice:** A distinctive tone that aligns with the topic and audience.
 - **Visual Appeal:** Use of headings, subheadings, and sometimes quotes or bullet points.
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The Structure of a Feature Article

Writing a feature article is like guiding your reader on a journey. Each section serves a purpose:

1) The Headline

Craft a headline that grabs attention and gives the reader a reason to keep reading.

- **Example:** *"The Future of Education: Is Technology the Answer?"*

Pro Tip: Use alliteration, puns, or intriguing questions to make it stand out.

2) The Hook (Opening Paragraph)

Start with a powerful opening that draws the reader in. Use an anecdote, startling fact, or thought-provoking statement.

- **Example:** *"Every day, we scroll past hundreds of photos online. But what if one of them changed your life forever?"*

Pro Tip: Keep the tone conversational to create an immediate connection.

3) The Body

Break your article into clear sections, each with its own focus. Include a mix of:

- **Facts and Data:** Support your points with research or statistics.
- **Personal Stories or Case Studies:** Add a human element to make your writing relatable.
- **Quotes:** Use expert opinions or firsthand accounts to add credibility.

Example Paragraph: *In 2023, over 1.5 billion students worldwide participated in online learning. For some, it opened doors to new opportunities; for others, it widened the gap between the privileged and the disadvantaged.*

4. The Conclusion

End with a strong closing that leaves the reader with something to think about. You could:

- Pose a question.
 - Offer a solution.
 - Reflect on the significance of the topic.
 - **Example:** *“As we navigate a world increasingly shaped by technology, the challenge remains: how do we ensure no one is left behind?”*
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Techniques to Elevate Your Writing

1. Use a Conversational Tone

Write as if you’re speaking directly to the reader. Avoid overly formal language.

- **Example:** *“Imagine waking up tomorrow to find your phone has vanished. Could you survive?”*
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2. Appeal to the Senses

Engage the reader by describing scenes vividly.

- **Example:** *“The classroom was silent except for the hum of laptops and the scratch of pens on paper.”*
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3. Include Compelling Quotes

A well-placed quote can add authority and intrigue.

- **Example:** “‘We are at a crossroads,’ says Dr. Smith, ‘where technology can either bridge the divide or deepen it.’”
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Common Pitfalls to Avoid

1. **Overloading with Facts:** Balance information with storytelling.
 2. **Lack of Focus:** Stick to the main topic and avoid unnecessary tangents.
 3. **Boring Headlines:** Make your title enticing and relevant.
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Practice Prompts

1. Write a feature article about the impact of social media on teenagers.
 2. Explore the role of artificial intelligence in shaping the future of work.
 3. Discuss the importance of mental health awareness in schools.
 4. Write about a local hero making a difference in your community.
 5. Investigate how climate change is affecting everyday life.
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Past Leaving Certificate Topics

Here are some topics inspired by past exam questions:

1. “Write a feature article for a magazine aimed at young people, discussing the challenges and benefits of online learning.” (2021)
 2. “Write a magazine article exploring the effects of social media on friendships.” (2018)
 3. “Write a feature article about a memorable event or festival in your area.” (2016)
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Example Feature Article

Headline: *From Screens to Dreams: How Online Learning is Shaping the Future*

Opening Paragraph: *For millions of students around the globe, education is no longer confined to four walls and a chalkboard. Instead, the classroom has transformed into a digital space, where learning happens at the click of a button. But is this shift a blessing or a curse?*

Body:

Take Emily, a 15-year-old student from a rural village. Before online schooling, access to quality education seemed like an impossible dream. Now, armed with a tablet and an internet connection, Emily attends virtual lectures and collaborates with peers worldwide. However, for students like Alex, who lacks stable internet, this digital leap has only widened the gap. “Online learning opened doors I didn’t know existed,” Emily says. Meanwhile, Alex worries about being left behind, his textbooks his only companions.

Statistics further highlight this divide: in 2023, 85% of students in urban areas had access to online education compared to just 40% in rural regions. As technology advances, bridging this gap has become a global priority.

Conclusion:

The future of education is undoubtedly digital, but it’s up to educators, policymakers, and communities to ensure that no student is left behind. As we embrace this new era, the question remains: can we make education truly universal?

Final Thought

A feature article blends facts and storytelling to engage the reader while delivering a clear message. By combining a captivating structure, vivid language, and relevant content, you can craft an article that both informs and entertains—and secures top marks.