

Journalistic article

When you aspire the award for best development relevant master's thesis, your thesis will need to be transformed into a short, popularizing English (or Dutch, if you are a Flemish student) journalistic article. As Flemish students' applications are also candidates for the "[Vlaamse Scriptieprijs](#)", we refer to [their guidelines](#) for the writing of a journalistic article. We have translated these in English, and made some adjustments specific for our award. With the following tips we hope to put you on the right track. Good luck!

Objective

The intention is to make your master's thesis more understandable. Convince the reader your research is interesting, inspiring and worth reading. The best way to achieve this is through fascinating but accessible writing.

Public

You are not writing your master's thesis for your supervisor or professor, but for **an audience of regular people** who have no prior knowledge of your topic. Scientists and academics often use overly complex, abstract (technical) writing, but **the average reader** is interested in an **understandable, concrete, personal text**. Your audience isn't obligated to read your article. You will have to stimulate your public and get them interested in reading your text (and most importantly, keep reading your text).

Try to write with the following audience in mind:

- An intelligent 16-year old.
- He/she knows nothing about the topic.
- He/she does not have to read your master's thesis. It's up to you whether he/she reads it or not.

Writing tips

- Use simple language (don't overuse adverbs and adjectives)
- Do not make typos, writing errors or linguistic errors
- Short sentences, short paragraphs, no jargon (explain any technical terms immediately and in a simple way)
- Illustrate abstract scientific phenomena with concrete examples, comparisons or pictures which an average reader could understand
- Use subheading to get a more structured text
- Maximum of 1.000 words
- If necessary you can add some charts or pictures (preferably in the right place in your master's thesis or as an appendix)

Structure

Title: an eyecatcher

The title has to be an eyecatcher: it has to stand out and attract attention. A few examples would be:

[Immunity for crimes against humanity](#)

[Brussels Inc. - Lobbying in Europe](#)

[Human rights watchdog halted out of fear of a muzzle](#)

[Traffic casualties in India: enough is enough!](#)

Introduction: A strong summary

In your **introduction** you will have to seduce the reader and touch further upon your topic. Keep the introduction concise (on average 3 to 5 sentences). A couple techniques for a good opening sentence in your introduction:

- **Quote**
Begin your article with a strong quote.
- **Description of ambience**
Begin your article with a description of a person, a place, an object or occurrence.
- **Question**
Start your article with a question presented to the reader.
- **You-opening**
Start your article by directly talking to the reader. Suppose *you* were...
- **Anecdote**
The article begins with a situation that serves as an illustration for the topic.
- **Mystery**
The article begins with an act but no information is given about who or what it is exactly about.
- **Straight to the point**
The article begins in an interesting, exciting part of the story. Then everything leading up to that point is explained.
- **Contrast**
The article begins with an example of a striking contrast, which serves as illustration of your article.
- **Riddle or Paradox**
The article begins with a riddle or apparent contradiction. Of course the solution can be found later on in the article.
- **Shocking statistics**
The article begins with some shocking statistics. The statistic will have to be something that the reader has never heard before, as its purpose is to astound and surprise.

The body of text: Elaboration

In the main body of text you connect your work with the reader, indicate the main theme and elaborate on your topic.

A) Connect your work and the reader

Why does somebody have to read your article?

Encourage your audience to read the article by presenting your research in an attractive manner. To achieve this, you will have to keep in mind in what ways the reader will come into contact with your master's thesis. (internet, social media,...)

B) Formulate the theme of your article

What is the article about?

Formulate the theme, message, theorem and the core idea of your article in a simple yet precise way.

C) Elaborate on your topic/core idea

Focus on the important parts, don't lose yourself (and the reader) by putting in too many details. Be concrete instead of vague and give examples.

Conclusion: Summarise your theorem and message

In the conclusion there should be a very short summary of what you talked about previously in your article.

This can be done in a couple simple sentences or in a more original way through usage of the following techniques:

- **Anecdote**
The article ends with a (funny) situation that subtly summarizes the problem or solution..
- **Act**
The article ends with an action in which the entire story is summarised.
- **Quote**
The article ends with a powerful quote, that beautifully summarizes the story.
- **Circle**
The end connects to the beginning of your article.
- **Description of ambience**
The article ends with a description of a person, place, thing or act that subtly represents what might happen next in response to the story.
- **Remark**
The article ends with a paradox, a reference to the reader or some food for thought.