

## **Questions and Answers about Alternative Story Forms**

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### **Q. What are alternative story forms?**

A. Anything that isn't one of our traditional forms. You're reading one right now: a Q&A. We can still use inverted pyramid stories, anecdotal leads and other devices, but we can also tell stories and convey information in other ways. Consider these forms as just another option in brainstorming, writing and editing.

### **Q. Why use them?**

A. Like everything else we do, use them to inform the readers. Specifically, ASFs can provide quick facts and deep context. They can cut information into "bite sizes" that are easier to digest even as they bolster our watchdog role. ASFs can also offer variety and surprise the reader.

### **Q. What are some different kinds of ASFs?**

A. Supplemental forms, such as timelines, accompany "normal" stories. Standalone forms do just that — like standalone photos, they are self-contained storytelling devices. This packet has examples of both.

### **Q. How do I know when to try one?**

A. There are no hard rules on this. Here are times to consider different story approaches:

- Recurring events, annual awards, etc.
- Complicated issues
- Definitions of terms
- Updates and assessments

### **Q. How do I learn more?**

A. NewsU ([www.newsu.org](http://www.newsu.org)) offers a free online course on story forms.