

Lesson Plan: Anatomy of a Sports Article (4A's Method)

Materials Needed

- Access to 3 Sample Sports Articles (Digital or Print):
 1. One recent game summary (Sports News)
 2. One article about an athlete's personal journey (Sports Feature)
 3. One opinion piece about a coaching decision or league rule change (Sports Editorial)
- Highlighters or Colored Pencils (3 different colors)
- Notebook or designated worksheet for note-taking
- Writing utensil/device
- Timer/Clock

Learning Objectives

By the end of this 50-minute lesson, learners will be able to:

- **Identify:** Name the essential elements (Who, What, Where, When, How/Why) required in a basic sports report.
- **Differentiate:** Distinguish between Sports News, Sports Feature, and Sports Editorial categories based on their purpose and structure.
- **Apply:** Analyze a provided sports article to correctly categorize it and highlight its key informational components (players, teams, score, coaches).
- **Create:** Draft a compelling introductory summary of a sports event that includes all necessary factual elements.

Success Criteria

You know you are successful when you can:

1. Correctly label the three article types and explain the goal of each one.
2. Highlight the name of the sport, teams, players, and coaches in a sample article.
3. Write a clear opening paragraph for a sports game summary in under 5 minutes.

I. Activate (10 Minutes)

Goal: Hook the learner and connect the lesson content to prior knowledge about sports reporting essentials.

1. Hook: The Essentials

Imagine your favorite team just won a championship game, but you missed the broadcast! When you ask a friend about it, what five pieces of information **MUST** they tell you in the first 30 seconds for you to understand what happened?

- (Learner shares responses, typically including team names, score, and the result.)

2. Defining the Core Elements ("The Sports Report W's") (I Do/We Do)

Great sports journalism always answers the basics immediately. We call these the core elements. Let's make sure we include all the specifics:

The Question	The Required Sports Element
WHO?	Winning Team, Losing Team, Key Players, Coaches (if relevant)
WHAT?	The Type of Sport, The Final Outcome/Score, The Key Action
WHERE?	Location (Stadium/Arena)
WHEN?	Date and Time of the event
HOW/WHY?	The defining moment or strategy (e.g., "by a last-second field goal")

Activity: Quick Check: "If you read an article that didn't mention the final score, would it be a successful news report?" (Answer: No, because it fails the 'What' test.)

II. Acquire (15 Minutes)

Goal: Teach the difference between the three primary categories of sports articles.

1. The Three Categories of Sports Writing (I Do)

Sports articles are not all the same! They have different jobs. We can divide them into three categories:

- **Category 1: Sports News (The Scoreboard)**

Purpose: To quickly and objectively report the facts of a recent event. This is the 5-W's and H delivered immediately.

Tone: Neutral, factual, timely. Focused on the game/event itself.

Example: A summary of last night's basketball game and the final stats.

- **Category 2: Sports Feature (The Backstory)**

Purpose: To tell a deeper story about a person, place, or trend. It focuses on human interest, emotion, and background.

Tone: Descriptive, emotional, reflective. Focuses on 'Why' things matter.

Example: An article about a rookie player overcoming an injury, or the history of a rivalry.

- **Category 3: Sports Editorial/Opinion (The Argument)**

Purpose: To share the writer's informed opinion, analysis, or argument on a sports topic.

Tone: Persuasive, argumentative, subjective. Uses phrases like "In my opinion..." or "The league must..."

Example: An article arguing that the coach should be fired, or that a new rule is unfair.

2. Article Analysis Practice (We Do)

Use the three sample articles provided. The learner should read the first paragraph of each one.

Instructions: Use your highlighters/pencils to color-code the samples based on the category you think they fit into. Discuss the clues:

- *If it starts with stats and a score, it's probably **News**.*
- *If it starts with a personal anecdote or a moment of tension, it's probably a **Feature**.*
- *If it starts with a strong statement or judgment, it's probably an **Editorial**.*

III. Apply (15 Minutes)

Goal: Practice identifying the elements and creating original content based on the News structure.

1. Instant Replay: Extracting the Elements (I Do/We Do)

Take the **Sports News** sample article. This time, we will highlight the essential elements we defined earlier.

Instructions (Model first, then learner follows):

1. Use one color to highlight the **Type of Sport, Teams, and Coaches** involved.
2. Use a second color to highlight the names of the **Key Players** mentioned.
3. Use a third color to highlight the **Outcome/Score** and key action (the How/Why).
4. (Review and check against the 4 W's table.)

2. The Draft: Writing the Lead (You Do)

You are a reporter on deadline! Use the following scenario to write a single, strong introductory paragraph (the lead) for a Sports News report. Remember, the lead must contain the WHO, WHAT, WHEN, and HOW.

Scenario: The Maplewood Vikings (coached by Rita Patel) defeated the Northside Bears in a high-school soccer match yesterday evening. The final score was 2-1, won by a sudden penalty kick from Vikings star striker, Leo "The Rocket" Rodriguez, in the 85th minute of play.

Drafting Time: 5 minutes.

IV. Assess & Adapt (10 Minutes)

Goal: Evaluate the learner's understanding and provide opportunity for self-reflection and extension.

1. Self-Assessment and Feedback

Learner reads their drafted lead paragraph aloud. Use the checklist below to assess the draft:

Success Checklist (Lead Paragraph)

Y/N

Mentions the Type of Sport (Soccer)?

Mentions Both Teams (Vikings/Bears)?

Success Checklist (Lead Paragraph)

Y/N

Mentions the Key Player (Leo Rodriguez)?

Mentions the Outcome/Score (2-1)?

Explains the 'How' (Penalty kick in 85th minute)?

Educator Feedback: Focus specifically on the clarity and immediacy of the factual reporting. If elements are missing, prompt the learner on which 'W' question was left unanswered.

2. Conclusion and Recap

Quickly review the three types of articles. "If you wanted to argue that the coach made a bad decision, which category would you write?" (Editorial) "If you wanted to share the story of a player's tough childhood, which one?" (Feature)

Key Takeaway: Excellent sports reporting requires structure. Know your audience, and know whether you are delivering facts (News), background (Feature), or an argument (Editorial).

3. Differentiation & Extension Activities

- **Scaffolding (For learners needing support):** Provide a fill-in-the-blank template for the "Instant Replay" drafting activity instead of requiring free writing.
- **Extension (For advanced learners):** Challenge the learner to take the same scenario (Vikings vs. Bears 2-1 win) and write a short paragraph for a **Sports Editorial** arguing that the referee should not have called the penalty kick, explaining why it was a bad call. This forces a switch from objective to subjective writing.