

INTRO TO MAGAZINE WRITING

What is a Magazine Article

Definitions

- The American Society of Magazine Editors (ASME)
 - <http://www.magazine.org>
 - Non-profit trade organization
 - Runs the National Magazine Awards
 - Defines the categories of magazine
 - Runs workshops, lunches and conferences for its 850 members
 - Internship program

The National Magazine Awards

- A national competition for the best writing, series and overall magazine
 - http://www.magazine.org/asme/magazine_awards/index.aspx
- We will be using their definitions
- Understand these categories are “squishy”
- Online is considered its own category
 - Design

Stories

□ **Public Interest:**

- These articles shed new light on an issue
- Should affect discussion on a national or local level
- “Broken” chronicles crash victims as the author attempts to illustrate “blind spots” in the public consciousness and the legal system
- “Open Secrets”

□ **Features:**

- Excellent in feature writing (circular logic, I know)
- Stylish and originality in writing about a subject
 - Stylish: articulate use of language as a metaphor for the idea of your story
 - Originality: borne from research and lots of reading
- “The Things That Carried Him” traces, in reverse-chronological order, the life of a soldier who was killed in Iraq
- “Most Likely to Succeed”

□ Profile:

- Vivid, perceptiveness approaching a subject
 - Vivid: anecdotal stories that illustrate, with little movements, something important about the person
 - Perceptiveness: an ability to hear what is not being said and see what is not being shown
- “The Lost Years and David Foster Wallace” is an account of DFW’s descent into serious clinical depression and suicide.

□ **Essays:**

- Topics range from personal to political
- Author's eloquence, perspective, fresh thinking and unique voice
 - Eloquence: requires a command of the language
 - Perspective: requires some window into the “human condition”; look for similarities
 - Unique Voice: the thing you will look for your whole life
- “Deciderization”; “Consider the Lobster”; follows a daughter as she takes her father backpacking to the place he first began to molest her



□ **Columns/Commentary:**

- Short-form political, social, economic, humorous
- Eloquence and force of argument
 - Eloquence: requires a command of the language
 - Force of Argument: requires a logical, hierarchical structure of debate backed up with specific, new information

□ **Reviews/Criticisms**

- Knowledgeable, persuasive and original voice brought to the humanities
 - Knowledgeable: what you think and what you think you know are irrelevant
 - Persuasive: a contextualized and well-articulated argument
 - Original Voice: sound different than everyone else
- “Tales Out of School” takes on educational writer Jonathan Kozol’s latest book



□ Personal Service:

□ Advice or **instruction** to improve the quality of life

- Instruction: these are helpful, little-known steps; your opinion is mostly irrelevant

□ “Retool, Reboot, Rebuild” is a life-maintenance “get in shape” piece written by a neurosurgeon and internist