

LITTER LESS
CAMPAIGN



YOUNG REPORTERS

FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Youth-Led Environmental Journalism
Guide to writing like an Environmental Journalist



IN ASSOCIATION WITH:



*Young Reporters
for the environment*

Keep 
Australia
Beautiful

WRITING



YOUNG REPORTERS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Youth-Led Environmental Journalism

YOUNG REPORTERS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT is an international project from the Foundation for Environmental Education. In Australia it is coordinated by Keep Australia Beautiful and proudly brought to you by Wrigley's.

KEEP AUSTRALIA BEAUTIFUL

Keep Australia Beautiful is recognised as Australia's independent litter prevention thought and practice leader, that strives for a litter free and sustainable Australia. It is a national organisation comprised of independent state and territory organisations.

With 48 years of experience in engaging Australians to care for their local environments, KAB programs include National Award and Recognition Programs, National Litter Index, Beverage Container Recycling Grants, Eco-Schools, and Keep Australia Beautiful Week in August.

FOUNDATION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

FOUNDATION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION (FEE) is a non-governmental and non-profit organisation aiming to promote sustainable development through environmental education (formal school education, training of staff and general awareness raising). In Australia FEE is mainly active through two environmental education programmes: Eco-Schools and Young Reporters for the Environment, both co-ordinated by Keep Australia Beautiful.

Proudly brought to you by:



Hey, Young Reporters!

If you're reading this guide it's because you care about your environment. You understand that writing is a powerful tool for telling people about what's happening in the world and want people to be aware of what's happening in their own backyards.

You also might know that by submitting an article to Australia's YRE competition you have the chance to have your article featured by Keep Australia Beautiful, win cool prizes, and use your article to gain valuable attention on an important issue.

In this guide, you will discover everything you need to know to become an effective Young Reporter for the Environment.

We have all the tips for writing a great news article, and by the time you're done you will have an excellent piece that will educate people about a significant environmental issue in your community.

Before you jump in, check out the next page for a brief overview about everything you need to know to submit your article and then, you are good to go!

We can't wait to see the submissions from Australian students. So what are you waiting for?

YOUNG REPORTERS TEAM

Keep Australia Beautiful
eco-schools@kab.org.au

Editor's Guidelines

Part of the fun of Australia's Young Reporter for the Environment Litter Less Campaign is the chance to have your article featured by Keep Australia Beautiful and to win cool prizes.

In order to be eligible, there are just a few quick things you'll need to keep in mind:

1. Stories should investigate an environmental issue relating to litter and/or waste and propose possible solutions.
2. Make sure you include local content. We're interested in how this topic affects your community!
3. Your article should be no more than 1000 words.

THAT'S IT! Now let the writing begin...



Top Tips for Writing:

If you have a knack for the written word, this book is for you. Becoming an effective journalist will take a little practice, but the process will also be fun and leave you with a great article and superb skills.

Simply follow these six steps for writing an article that is engaging and interesting. Use this guide as a quick overview on how to write a news article, or check out link if you want more advice.

Step #1: Choosing Your Subject

While Australia’s YRE requires that you choose one local issue to focus on, the difficult part can sometimes be narrowing it down. Here are some tips for selecting an engaging and exciting story.



Top Tips:

Be In the Know

Reading other people’s stories will help you know what is being talked about and what other aspects of the story could be covered.

Discover Your Passion

It’s important to write about something you feel passionate about. If you are interested in the subject, it will come through in your writing.

FOR MORE TIPS, PLEASE VISIT

www.kab.org.au/yre/



Step #2: Keeping It Local

One of the easiest and best ways to appeal to your readers is to relate a big issue back to what is happening in your own community. The challenge of Australia's YRE is to let the world know what environmental issues are happening in your town or neighbourhood.

For an interesting article be sure to find the local appeal.



Top Tips:

Remember Your Readers

The first thought we have when we read an article is usually 'So what?' So think about what would matter to your readers if you were writing for your local newspaper.

Levy the Local

We all tend to be most interested in things that are happening near to us, so act as if you are writing for your local newspaper and talk about how your subject affects your community.

FOR MORE TIPS, PLEASE VISIT
<http://kab.org.au/yre/>

QUESTION:

What are the first three questions that come to mind when you are thinking about your subject on a local scale?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Step #3: Do Some Digging

To be an effective reporter you're going to have to get the facts. There will often be many people and sources to choose from and making a careful selection of sources will help create a factual and engaging article. Performing interviews is ideal, but you should do some digging as well.

Check out **the website** for a list of resources. Better yet, when you find a good one share it with other Young Reporters by emailing it to:

eco-schools@kab.org.au

MY TOP WEBSITES:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

FOR MORE TIPS, PLEASE VISIT
www.kab.org.au/yre/





Step #4: Writing

By now, you should have a head full of information and a blank page in front of you – don't worry! Now is when you will turn all your research into a news article.

Below you will find some top tips for how to write an effective piece. Check out the next page for an article case study.

Top Tips:

Get Them Hooked

Begin with the most interesting part of the article before going into the facts. You want to get people interested and reading more!

Leave Your Opinions At Home

The job of a reporter is to present all the arguments and facts in a piece so the readers can come to their own conclusions.

Keep 'Em Short

Keeping your paragraphs to a couple sentences each can help to make the reading manageable and ensure people will keep reading to the end!

The Golden Rule of Plagiarism

Don't do it! Any ideas you get should be credited to the original source. If you're not sure, check with someone.

Now go on – get writing!

Clean-up volunteers tackle largely plastic pollution on Melbourne's beaches

Pollution on our beaches is getting worst fast, but government and industry is leaving it to volunteers to clean up the mess.

By Michael Green, The Sydney Morning Herald, October 8 2014



On duty: Nicko Lunardi and Laura Kelly of Scab Duty picking up rubbish at Stony Creek Backwash, Yarraville
Photo: Paul Jeffers

Nicko Lunardi, from Newport, is wearing a black T-shirt with two skulls on it. He is 27 years old, an electrician, and a drummer in two punk bands. He's also the leader of a small group of volunteer beach cleaners in Melbourne's west. It's Sunday morning and a dozen people have slipped through a gap in the fence to the Jawbone Reserve in Williamstown, the closest marine sanctuary to the CBD. Parks Victoria's website describes it as an "unspoilt place" and a "haven for coastal and marine life".

It is full of trash. Lunardi picks up a fistful of sandy debris, shot through with countless plastic chunks,

lumps and specks. "What can we do with that?" he asks.

In the next hour, the group fills 16 large bags with plastic waste: wrappers, bottles, straws, lighters, labels, lollipop sticks, thongs. Plus rope, parking meter tickets, innumerable indefinable broken bits, half a dozen syringes and a tyre.

Lunardi had been in the habit of cleaning up litter by himself. "I felt weird telling people I picked up rubbish," he says. "But then I realised, 'No, I think they're weird not picking up rubbish.'"

So in June he started Scab Duty.

The name comes from the slang for "yard duty" from his school days in Werribee. Now, every Sunday morning, a small group of volunteers spends one hour collecting refuse. And they like it – sort of.

It is Luke Fraser's second week on Scab Duty. He's sporting skinny black jeans and gumboots. "It makes me feel better afterwards," he explains. "I didn't realise how bad it is - I thought there were programs in place. I miss ignorance."

Ignorance has just become much harder, for citizens, industry and policymakers alike: CSIRO has released the damning results of a

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three-year study of marine debris around Australia’s coastline and seas. Three-quarters of all the refuse is plastic, and almost all of that comes in small pieces. In Australian waters, it found up to 40,000 pieces of plastic per square kilometre.

The report states that “plastic production rates are intensifying” and “the volume of refuse humans release into marine systems is growing at an exponential rate”. Dr Denise Hardesty, the study’s lead author, says plastic has devastating effects on wildlife. She estimates that in the past few years, between 5000 and 15,000 turtles have been ensnared in abandoned fishing nets in the Gulf of Carpentaria alone.

Nearly half of all seabirds have plastic in their guts; by mid-century it will be 95 per cent.

Many people have heard of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, the floating refuse soup in the North Pacific Ocean. But there are actually five oceanic gyres - rotating ocean currents - which have come to trap our debris. One reaches close to the coast of Perth.

For the CSIRO research, students and “citizen scientists” surveyed the beaches at Port Melbourne, St Kilda and Williamstown. As in other urban areas, they found more rubbish than where the coastline is clear. Above all, they found “cigarette butts, lots of cigarette butts”, Hardesty says.

“Plastic has devastating effects on wildlife. In the last few years, between 5,000 and 15,000 turtles have been ensnared in abandoned fishing nets in the Gulf of Carpentaria alone. Nearly half of all seabirds have plastic in their guts; by mid-century it will be 95 per cent.”

Dr Denise Hardesty

Environment protection Authority Victoria has modelled the way plastic circulates once it washes into the bay. From the rivermouth, it blows east and strikes the shore, often in the shelter of headlands. What doesn’t get beached will end up in Bass Strait within a year.

The consequences of all this plastic are two-fold. It can clog up some animals’ digestive systems, causing starvation or dehydration. But scientists have also discovered that plastic acts like a magnet for toxins in seawater. Contaminants concentrate on the plastic’s surface and are absorbed into the animals’ bloodstreams.

“It’s not just a problem of bottles on our beaches or plastic in our seabirds’ guts,” says Dr Jennifer Lavers, a marine biologist from University of Tasmania. “Microplastics are infiltrating zooplankton and filter feeders like clams, mussels and sea cucumbers. These are creatures at the absolute base of the food chain. That has repercussions for every other level.”

After the clean up at Jawbone Reserve, Lunardi drives to Stony Creek Backwash, a small park beneath the Westgate Bridge. Parks Victoria describes it as a “Wetland Wonder” containing a rare stand of White Mangroves. It could add that the mangroves are surrounded by a wide and deep crust of extraordinary filth, in which grimy soft drink bottles and rusty spray cans commingle with a stained rainbow of degraded plastic scraps.

Most of this refuse has flowed from citizens’ hands onto the streets, into stormwater drains and then, the waterways. But some is industrial. Among the bottle tops and polystyrene, Lunardi draws my attention to thousands of “nurdles”. They are tiny plastic pebbles, three to five millimetres wide, the raw material for plastic manufacturing. In the Stony Creek Backwash, they seem to comprise a significant portion of the soil. They’re a problem all around the world - and elsewhere in Melbourne too.

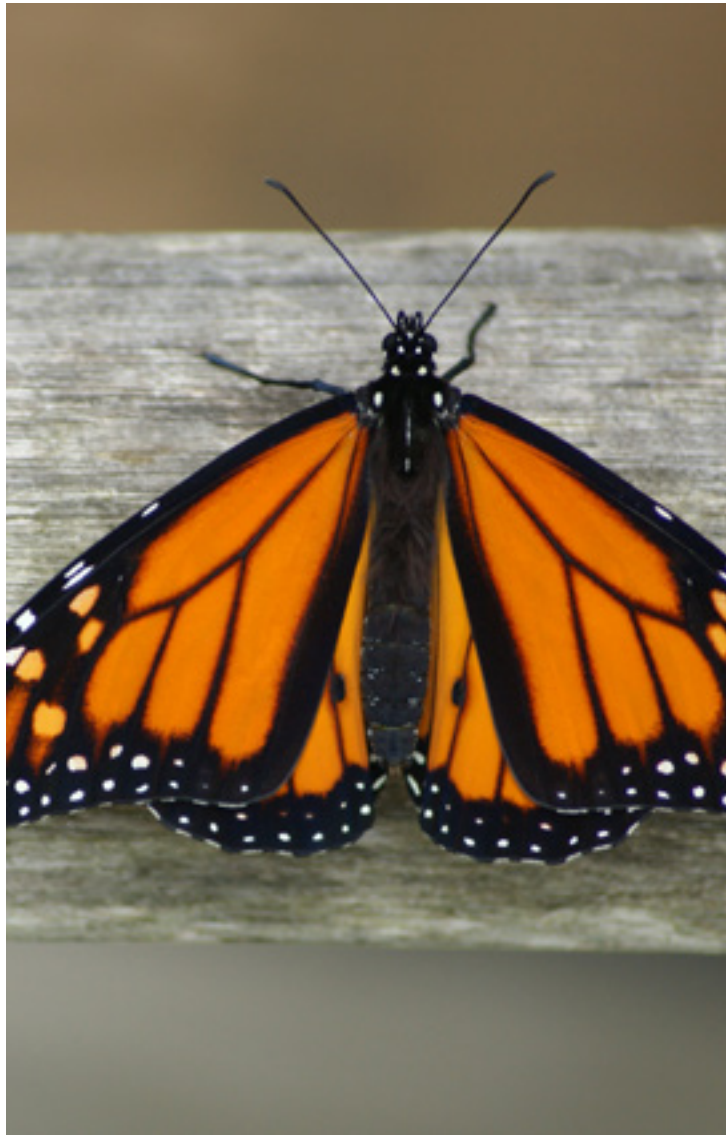
Directly across the river from Lunardi, Neil Blake and volunteers from a group called Port Melbourne Beach Patrol are conducting their own “nurdle survey”. (cont.)

Full article available at:
<http://www.smh.com.au/national/cleanup-volunteers-tackle-large-ly-plastic-pollution-on-melbournes-beaches-20141007-10r6zg.html>

Step #5: Editing

This is where you will turn your decent writing into a rockin’ piece of environmental journalism!

You can edit your story as you write it, but you might find it easier to write the whole thing and then start going over it with a fine tooth comb.



Top Tips:

Here are some top tips for editing. Use this as a checklist while you review your article.

Watch your Spelling

Use the spell check function on your computer and try reading your article backwards. It will help you look at the spelling of each individual word.

Check the Facts

Did you cover all the basic questions in your article?

Read out Loud

Does your article make sense? Reading your article out loud or to someone else is a good way to make sure your article is grammatically correct.

Finding Balance

Did you strike a fair balance between all opinions and sources on the issue?

FOR MORE TIPS, PLEASE VISIT

www.kab.org.au/yre/

Step #6:

Final Touches and Submitting

You've almost finished your first piece – Congratulations! Now there are just a few touches that will help make your pieces especially interesting.

Top Tips:

Choose a Headline

It should be clear from the headline what the story is about, although you won't want it to be a whole paragraph long! Check out some headlines from your local paper to help get the idea.

A Picture is Worth...

As wonderful and descriptive as your piece may be, the right picture can go a long way in bringing it to life. Be sure you have permission to use the photo you're choosing, or better yet, take your own!

Referencing

Don't forget to include a reference list with your submission so you can credit quotes and information that you use from other sources.

FOR MORE TIPS, PLEASE VISIT
www.kab.org.au/yre/



Submitting Your Piece

By the time you have finished this book, hopefully you will have tried out all the tips and tricks and created an article you want to submit to Australia's YRE.

You now only have to submit it for a chance to win amazing prizes!

Winners of Australia's Young Reporters for the Environment will automatically be considered for the international competition.

For more information visit the website, or email: eco-schools@kab.org.au



Thanks for participating in the **YOUNG REPORTERS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT LITTER LESS CAMPAIGN!**
Check out the website for more ideas to stay involved with environmental issues in your area.

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