

# Newspaper

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Whether it is a digital or traditional newspaper, people are constantly reading it. They might be skimming the pages while they have their breakfast, reading while on public transit or sipping their morning coffee as they catch up on the news. Newspaper articles are one of the oldest and most successful methods of promotion and Girl Guides can capitalize on this by joining the conversation. Why does it work? People do not realize that often articles are written because someone pitched a story to a reporter. You can use this to your advantage.



Securing an ad in a newspaper is not as challenging as you may think. Brainstorm five newspapers that you would love to see a Girl Guides article in. Next review the below to help you make it happen!

## How to Pitch a Newspaper

Newspapers get hundreds of pitches every week, which means your pitch needs to stand out. What you communicate is equally as important as whom you share it with. Use this checklist to guide you:

1. **Reporter:** Before you pitch you need to pin-point the name of a reporter who covers the beat you want to be featured in. For example, if your pitch is about the return of Girl Guide cookies, look for a lifestyle reporter. This is the type of person who might cover

your story. Conversely a reporter who has a finance beat would not be an ideal choice because the story would not resonate with their audience. Do some research online and try and find their full name and contact details.

- **Likely Beats:** Here is a list of beats that will most likely be interested in a Girl Guide story.
    - Community
    - Life
    - City Desk
    - Food
    - News
    - Lifestyle
  - **Alternative:** If you cannot find the name and/or contact details of your top reporter try finding details for the newsdesk or other reporters with similar beats. If you still cannot pin-point a contact, opt for reaching out to the editor of your desired beat. In the example above, that would be the lifestyle editor.
2. **Timeline:** When you send your pitch is extremely important. Sending it too far in advance of the event increases the risk of the reporter disregarding it. Sending it too late might mean he/she won't be able to fit the story into the news cycle. Ideally you should send your pitch one week before the event. This gives the reporter enough time to decide if he/she is interested (based upon the relevance to their audience and timeliness of the piece) and coordinate details.
  3. **Pitch:** Once you have the name of your contact, you can pitch them your story. Aim to do this via email. With hectic schedules it is challenging to get a hold of reporters via phone, making email the best option. Ensure your pitch has all of the necessary information and has a good angle. Use the 5w's to guide you (where, what, when, who, why).
  4. **Follow-up:** If no one has replied to your pitch, it is time to send a follow-up email. Remember to reply using the email thread to help give the reporter context. Simply copying and pasting your original email will not cut it though. Reiterate your points in a fresh and concise way to pique the reporter's interest.
    - **Next Steps:** If the reporter does not respond to your pitch or follow-up email, the opportunity has passed or he/she is not interested. It is crucial that you respect that. Pestering a contact will only frustrate them, which could cause them to block your email address or make them unresponsive to future pitches.

5. **The Spectrum of Success:** If a reporter responds to your pitch, one of two things can happen. 1. The reporter agrees to run your story! 2. The reporter declines. Both are huge wins. Of course securing an article is the ultimate goal, however the latter means you have now started a relationship with the reporter – which can translate into future articles.
  - **Media List:** Do not forget to record your contact's details in your media list. This is the perfect time to use their email signature for populating any outstanding information you might be missing in your database.

## How to Prepare for a Newspaper Interview

When a reporter agrees to run your story, things can unfold in three ways. 1. If you sent your pitch with a media release or media advisory, they may use that to build their story. 2. They ask you a series of questions via email or phone to write the story. 3. They ask to schedule an in-person interview.

When you are preparing for the two latter options, there are a few key tips you need to remember:

1. **Practice:** Practice, practice and practice. This is your moment to tell the public about Girl Guides so make sure you prepare a script and know it well. Try rehearsing in the mirror or with a friend. Most importantly do not forget to pause during sentences. This will help the reporter absorb the information and help you seem confident.
2. **Get Enough Rest:** The night before the big day make sure you get enough sleep. Getting 8 hours of sleep will help you stay alert and ready for questions.
3. **Answering Questions:** Always answer honestly and concisely. If there is a question you do not know the answer to, simply tell the reporter you will speak to the appropriate people and find out. Never try to invent answers. They do more harm than good.





4. **Attire:** As a GGC ambassador you need to look the part. A few days before the interview make sure your uniform is washed, ironed and ready to go. That way on the day of you are not rushing to do these things and you can focus on ensuring you are put together.
  - a. **Phone vs. in Person:** If you are preparing for an over-the-phone interview the appropriate attire is no longer an issue. However, if you are doing an in-person interview you still need to ensure you are wearing the GGC uniform. It might not be televised, but you still need to look presentable.
5. **Eye Contact & Smiling:** While you are speaking do not forget to make eye contact and smile. You want to be approachable, not standoffish. The reporter will be more receptive to a friendly spokesperson rather than someone who looks angry or bored.
  - a. **Over-the-Phone & Email:** If you are corresponding back and forth with a reporter via email or chatting on the phone, remember to be professional, friendly and forthcoming. It can be challenging to relay these characteristics when you are not face-to-face, so make a conscious effort. You want it to be an enjoyable experience, rather than like pulling teeth.
6. **Don't Go Off Script:** Stick to your talking points to ensure you do not say something inaccurate or inappropriate. No matter how casual the interview feels, always remember you are talking to the media.
7. **Word Whiskers & Fidgeting:** Often when we are nervous word whiskers creep into our sentences and/or we start to fidget. You might say words such as 'like' or 'umm' or start playing with your hair or jiggling your leg. Try to be conscious of these things. Practicing in the mirror or with a friend will help you pin-point any trouble areas and fix them.
  - a. **Over-the-Phone vs. Email:** These issues are extremely relevant for offer the phone and in-person interviews, but are likely not issues that arise during emailing.