

# Explain This!

How (and why) to do standalone explainers

# WHY

- Readers like them!
- They get read!
- They save time!
- They make great packaging!
- They fight misinformation!



# HOW

- What to explain
- Who will write
- Angle and format
- Micro or macro
- Outline
- The Nub, Part 2



# WHAT

To explain

- The day's big news
- Big news that's coming
- Stories with legs
- “Wheelhouse” subjects
- Key terms or buzzwords



# WHO

- Has the most expertise?
- Is available?





You're writing it! No, you're writing it!

# Alternatives ...

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Superman (or Superwoman)

Also-Pretty-Knowledgeable-If-Not-Quite-Super Man (or Woman)

Let's wait a little for Superman

Let's wait a little more for Superman OR somebody else who's pretty knowledgeable

Help! Anybody, help!



**Explainers must be checked closely by someone with expertise!**



# ANGLE

- What am I explaining?
- Making choices
- Preliminary headline



# FORMAT

- Q&A
- Scorecard
- Graphic
- Annotated List
- Video or podcast
- Make a new one up!



# MICRO/MACRO

**Zoom in** on one aspect, key term or event

**Zoom out** to give historical background or broad context

Writing a headline can help you decide

*(But remember, there's always a little "zoom in" in a "zoom out" piece, and vice versa)*

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# OUTLINES

Outlines help you:

- Break a subject down into manageable chunks
- Create a logical flow of information
- Remember what not to forget!



# OUTLINES

- Write a headline
- Write an intro
- Start with either the history or with “What’s happening?”
- End with points of view



# THE NUB

Again!

In a standalone explainer

The nub is even more  
important

and

You have more space for  
digging into it

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# THE NUB

- Identify the key point
- Make space in your outline
- Take it step by step
- Get help if you need it



# SUMMARY

Standalone explainers are

- Popular
- Best chance for depth
- Often team efforts
- Hard to do!
- Worth it!

