

STRUCTURE OF FEATURE WRITING

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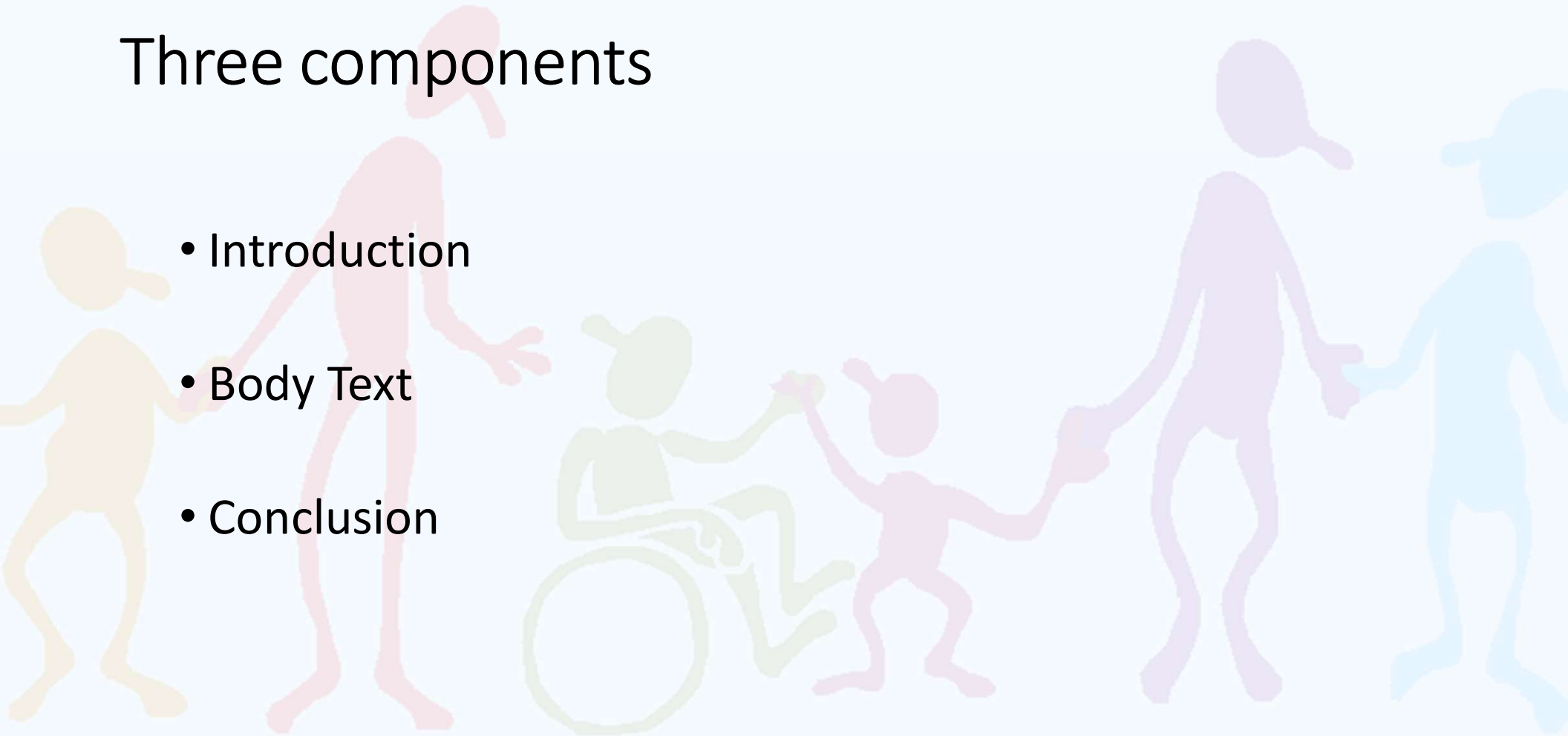
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What is feature writing?

•tells the reader a story. It has a beginning (lead), middle and end. It uses quotes liberally and allows the reader to see the story through detailed description and vivid writing.

Three components

- Introduction
- Body Text
- Conclusion



Components of Feature Writing

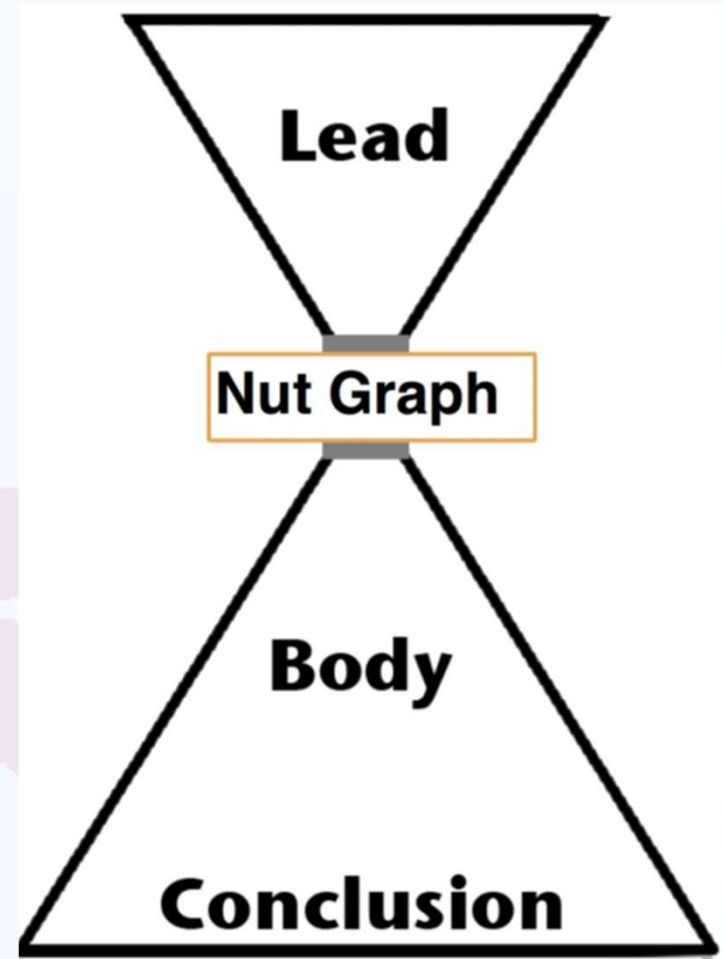
Introduction

Body text

Conclusion

Introduction - Lead

- Nut graph - Pouring information and emotion toward a focused point that tells us what the article is about

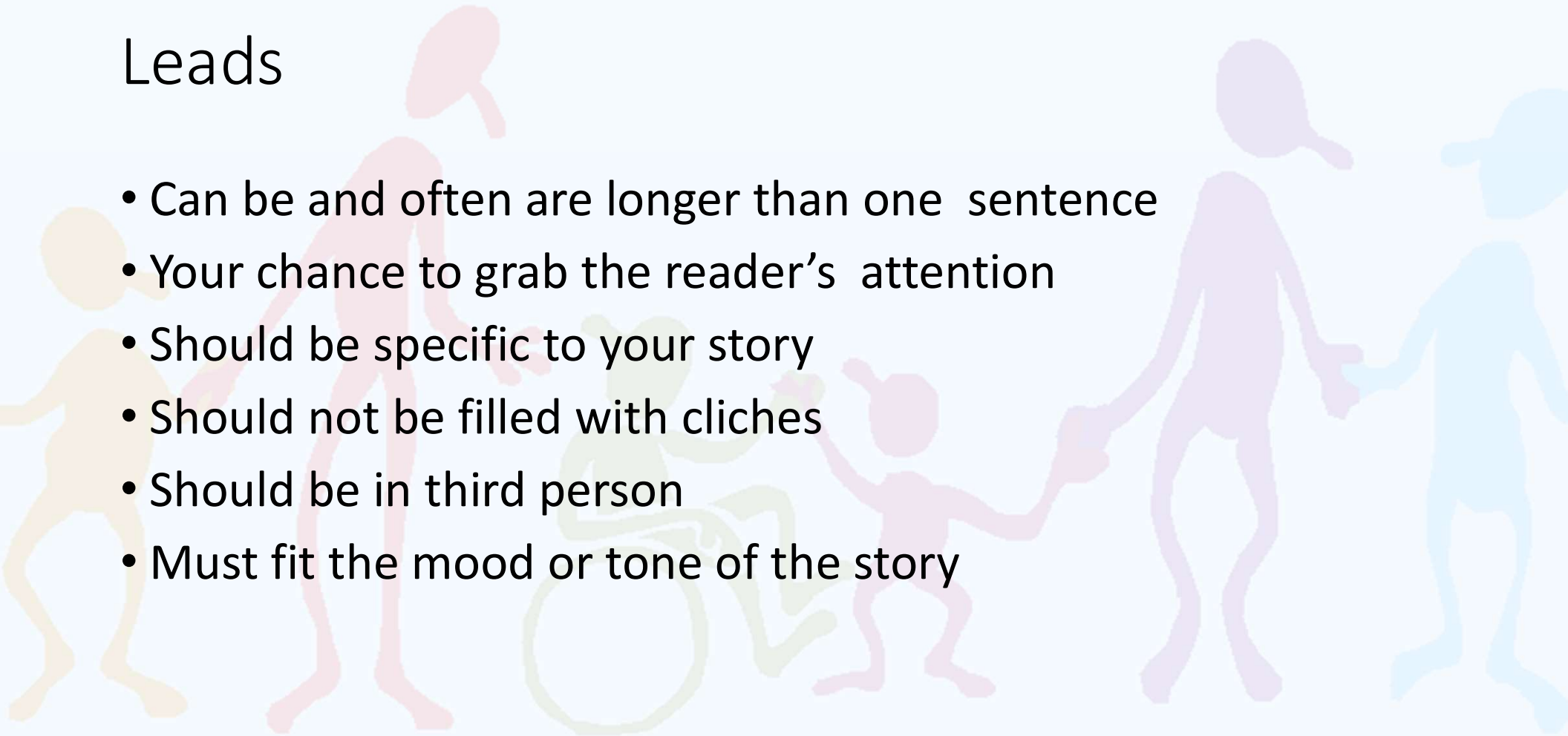


What is Lead/lede?

- The opening sentence must grab and hold the reader's attention by using specific, interest-arousing words.
- The lead must catch the spirit of the story and create the proper tone: serious, sarcastic, ironic, flippant, melancholy.

Leads

- Can be and often are longer than one sentence
- Your chance to grab the reader's attention
- Should be specific to your story
- Should not be filled with cliches
- Should be in third person
- Must fit the mood or tone of the story



Types of leads

Narrative - tells a story

Descriptive - describes a scene, person or subject

Direct Quote – must be used with narrative

Startling statement

Contrast and Compare (then and now)

Twist

Narrative – Tells a story

- Example

Justin Greer's 2,800 friends have never seen him cry. His father has seen him cry only once — the day last October when doctors told the 16-year-old football player that what he thought was a bad case of the flu was actually leukemia.

“He cried a bit then,” Mr. Greer said. “But then he squared off and said, ‘Well, I’m not dead yet.’ And I haven’t seen him cry since, although he’s told me that sometimes he cries at night when he’s all alone.”

Descriptive – Describe a person

- Example

ARE we there yet?” I ask in Malay between gasping breaths, while looking for a flat surface to take a breather. The Orang Asli guide in front turns around, flashes a bemused grin and shakes his head.

*The elderly man, whom we call Pak Cik Syam, **is insanely fit and filled with sinewy muscles. He leaps through exposed roots on the ground like an Olympian.** The sight of a twenty-something city boy struggling to hike a hill might have been laughable to him.*

(The Star Malaysia; 17 Sept. 2016; Chester Chin)

Descriptive – Describe a scene

- Example

A dozen mosquito bites, and several curses muttered silently under my breath later, we finally chance upon a Rafflesia that's in full bloom. The sight of the flower-especially when you factor in the hellish hike-is glorious. And as luck would have it, there are many seedling within the vicinity.

“The Rafflesia is like a pregnant lady,” Pak Cik Syam offers this bit of trivia as we make our way down the mountain. The flowering process according to him, takes about nine months-much like human pregnancy.

While going up had been a challenge, the decent is the unnerving part of the expedition. There are no branches or the tree trunks to hold on to. At times, I'am crawling on the ground to steady myself.

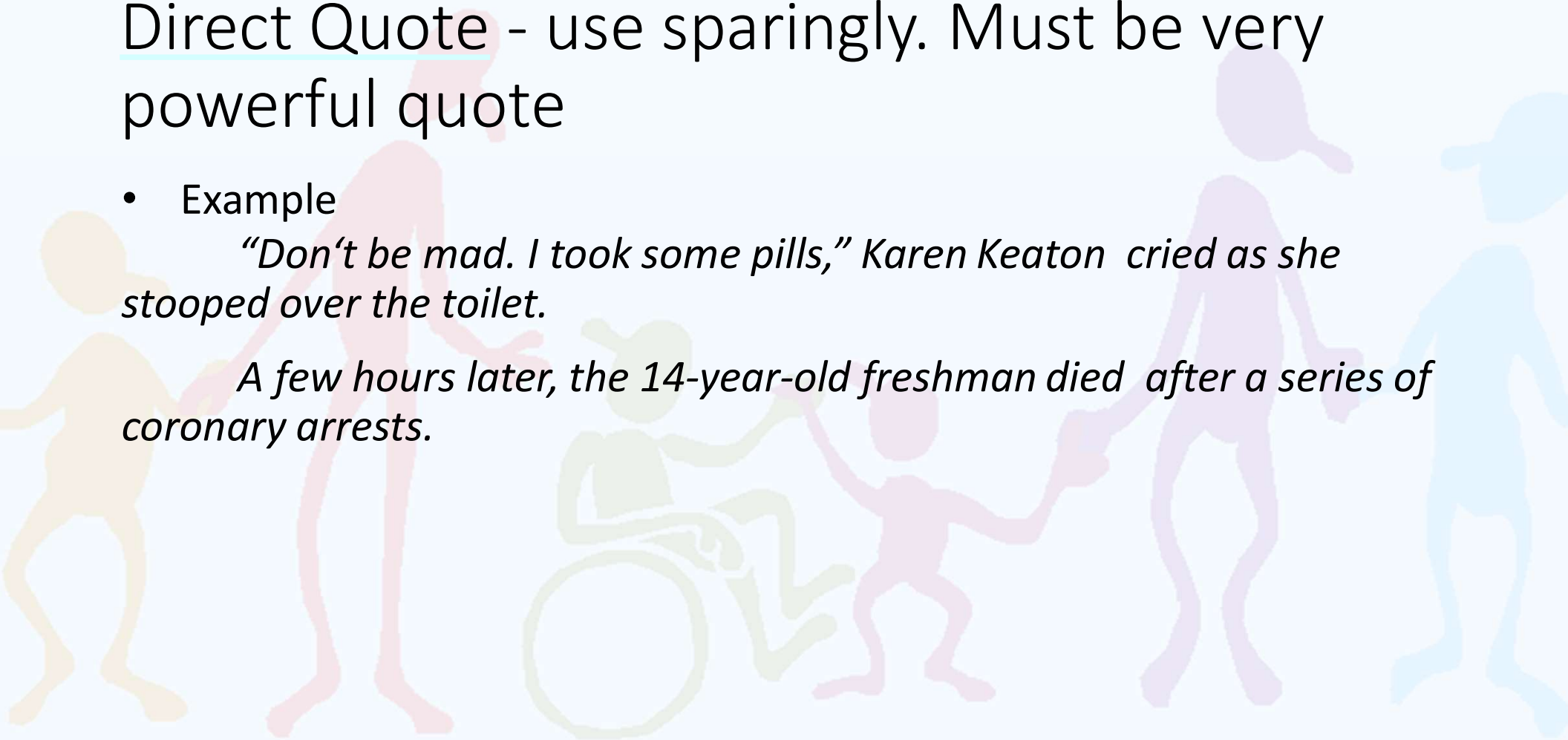
(The Star Malaysia; 17 Sept. 2016; Chester Chin)

Direct Quote - use sparingly. Must be very powerful quote

- Example

“Don’t be mad. I took some pills,” Karen Keaton cried as she stooped over the toilet.

A few hours later, the 14-year-old freshman died after a series of coronary arrests.



Startling Statement - creates drama

- Example

Customers who have to wait more than an hour to satisfy their sweet tooth come from all corners of Java, the Indonesian island where Yogyakarta sits in the middle.

One of them is Rama Luhur from the capital Jakarta, who waited nearly two hours to get a taste of the famous lupis after seeing Satinem on Netflix.

Twist - sets reader up for one mood and then twists it, surprises the reader

- Example

A group of candy stripers stand around the nursery, holding incubator babies. It's "loving time." Another young girl steps in with her mother and picks up a baby, too. She is not in a uniform, but in a hospital gown, for the baby she holds is her own — and it's her "loving time."

It's also time to say good-bye.

"I sat in that rocker and held him and rocked him and I cried and cried and cried," Amber, a senior, said. "I wanted that moment to last forever so I could always hold him and always be there for him."

"But I knew I couldn't. That's what hurt."

TWIST

The background of the slide features a series of colorful, semi-transparent silhouettes of people in various poses and activities. From left to right, there is a yellow silhouette of a person walking, a pink silhouette of a person walking, a green silhouette of a person in a wheelchair, a purple silhouette of a person walking, and a blue silhouette of a person walking. The silhouettes are arranged in a line, suggesting a diverse group of people.

- Example

How many children do you have?

A simple question. Unassuming. Perfect for small talk.
But Jim and Julie Silcock stumble.

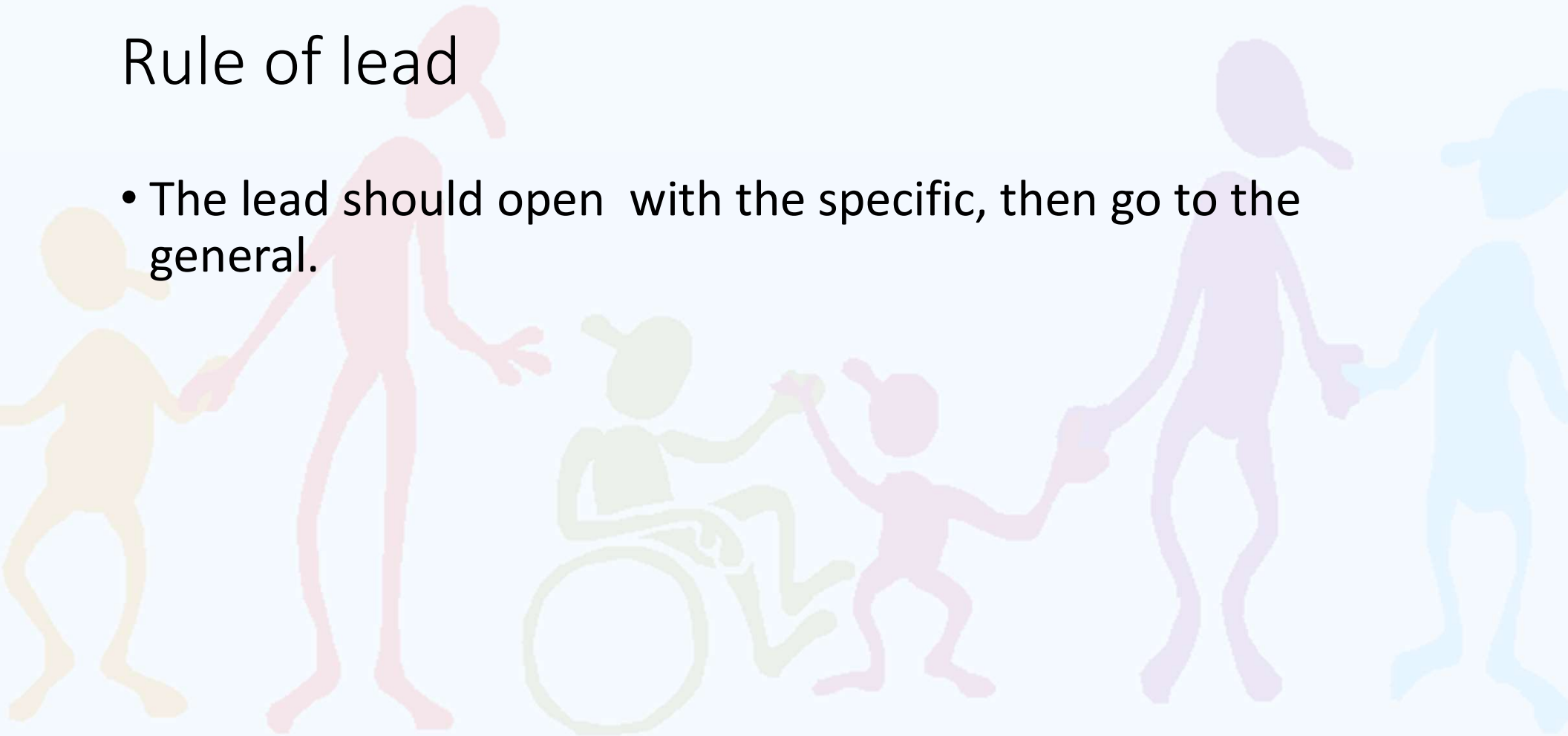
Dec. 29, 2002 flashes in front of them. And they don't know what to do.

Haltingly, Julie responds. *We have one son named James. He is a junior at Princeton.*

But the questions don't end there. For the past six years, they never have.

Rule of lead

- The lead should open with the specific, then go to the general.



Transition Quote/Formula

- Lead: Most interesting information. Something that will grab the reader's attention and drag them into the story.
- Nut Graph: A summary of what the story is going to be about. Why the story is important.
- Direct Quote: Connects to the nut graph. Use more than one sentence. Direct quotes should show the emotion of the story.
- Transition: Next important fact. Use transition words to help the story flow. They can be facts, indirect quotes or partial quotes.

continue

- Direct Quote: Connects to the first transition. Do not repeat the transition in the quote. DQ should elaborate on the transition.
- Transition: Next important fact. Use transition words to help the story flow. They can be facts, indirect quotes or partial quotes.
- Direct Quote: Connects to the second transition. Do not repeat the transition in the quote. DQ should elaborate on the transition.
- And so on...until the story is complete

Body

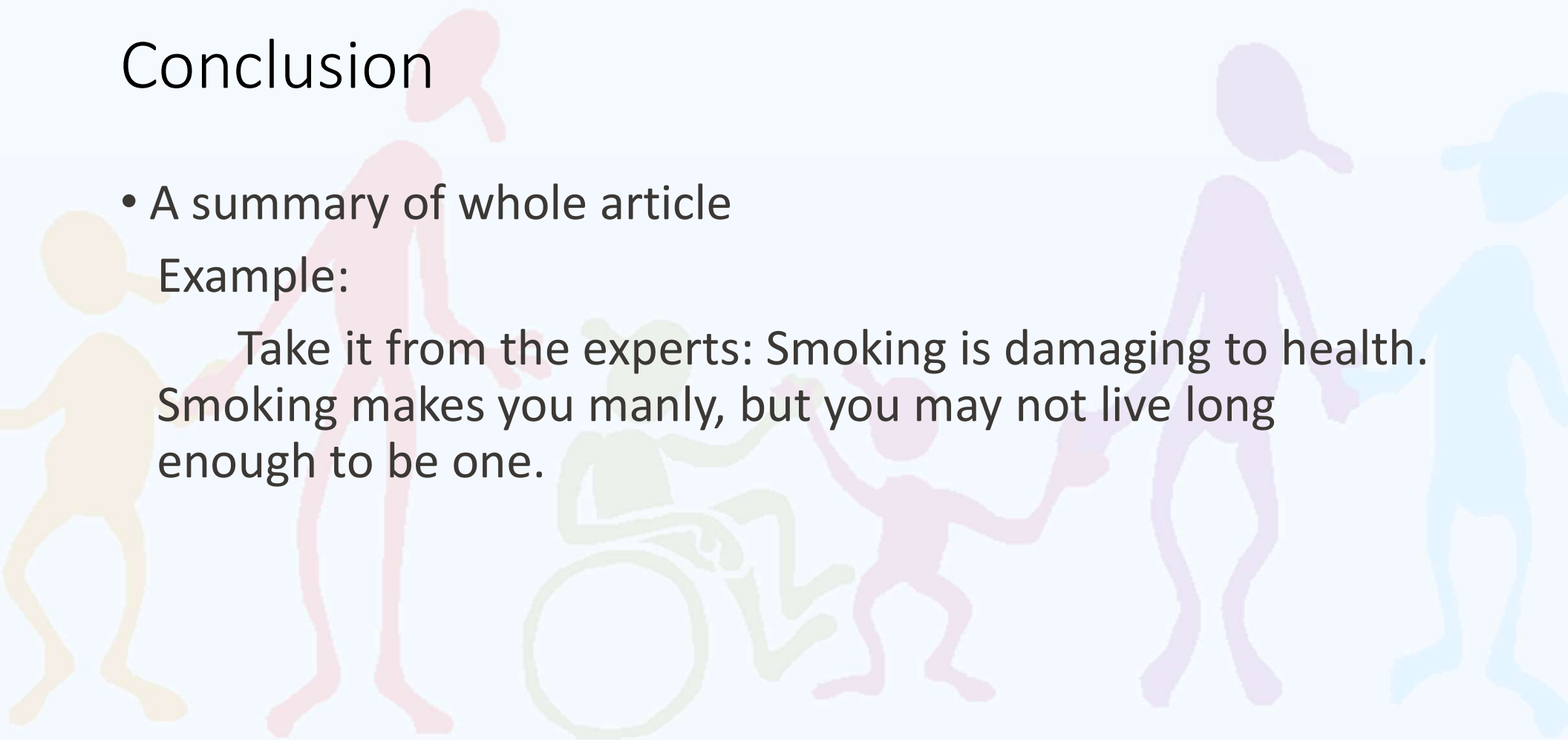
- supports the nut graph through examples and sources and anecdotes.
- understanding all aspects of the story are tied together and contained within the hourglass framework.
- The body must allow the ideas presented in the nut graph to broaden, but they have to stay connected to what is presented in the nut graph. No sand can flow outside of the hourglass, and no ideas can leave the framework presented in the nut graph.

Conclusion

- A summary of whole article

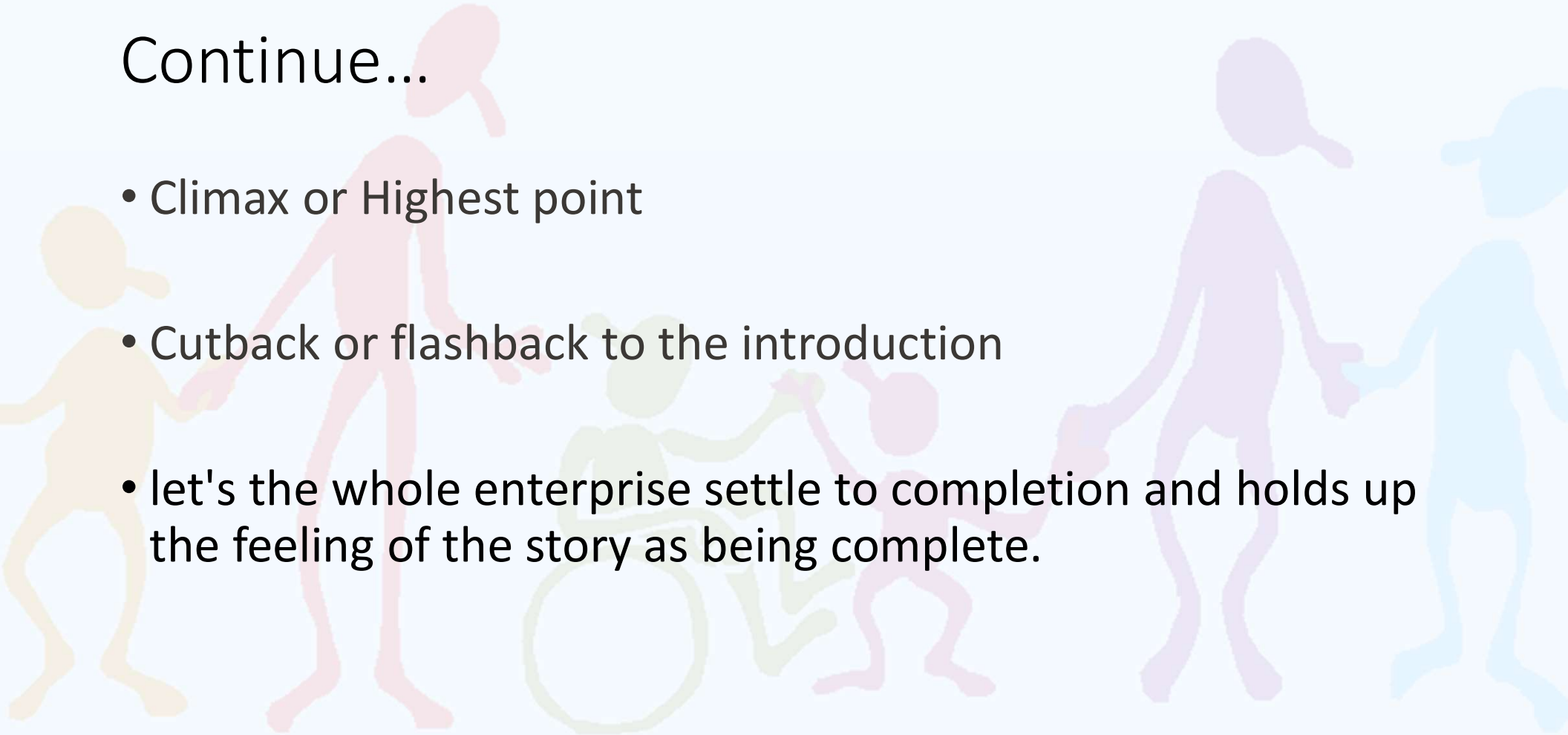
Example:

Take it from the experts: Smoking is damaging to health. Smoking makes you manly, but you may not live long enough to be one.



Continue...

- Climax or Highest point
- Cutback or flashback to the introduction
- let's the whole enterprise settle to completion and holds up the feeling of the story as being complete.



References

- Garisson, B. (2010). *Professional Feature Writing*. Routledge.
- Kraft, N. (Ed.). (2018). *Writing Fabulous Features*. The Ohio State University.

