



THE INSTITUTE OF CONSERVATION

# Writing articles & News stories for Icon

A Guide to writing for the Icon website



## Icon's mission is to support:

### Advocacy

through influencing our partners and the public

### Excellence

through building knowledge, high standards and valuing the profession

### Engagement

through encouraging public awareness and participation

## Icon stories and articles aim to:

- **inspire** people from all backgrounds to **value** and **engage** with heritage, conservation and conservators
- **promote** the value of high quality conservation to the public
- **champion excellence** in the practice of conservation
- **showcase** Icon **members** and conservation **projects**
- **raise awareness** of the potential of conservation to create wider benefits for society, such as supporting wellbeing, fostering a sense of community and addressing climate change

# What makes a good story?

## Purpose-led

Each news story or article must have a **purpose** or be of **informative** value. Posts showcasing a new project, or articles about personal experiences (for example accessing funding or getting into working in conservation) provide informational and inspirational content for our readers.

## Audience-focused

Make the article as **readable** and **accessible** as you can (not all Icon readers are practicing conservators). Avoid references and bibliographies - Icon articles aren't academic.

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## Engaging

Articles should be **interesting to read**, **educational** or **entertaining** for Icon website visitors. You can include quotes that are less than 140 characters, interesting statistics and inspirational content. Keep to the point and make every word count.

# Length

Aim for 300-1500 words

Our website has a variety of news stories and articles ranging from short informative posts to longer think pieces providing detailed insight and opinion. Our word limit is therefore equally broad. News stories tend to be at the lower end of the word limit.

Have more to say? Consider writing your story as a series over multiple articles.

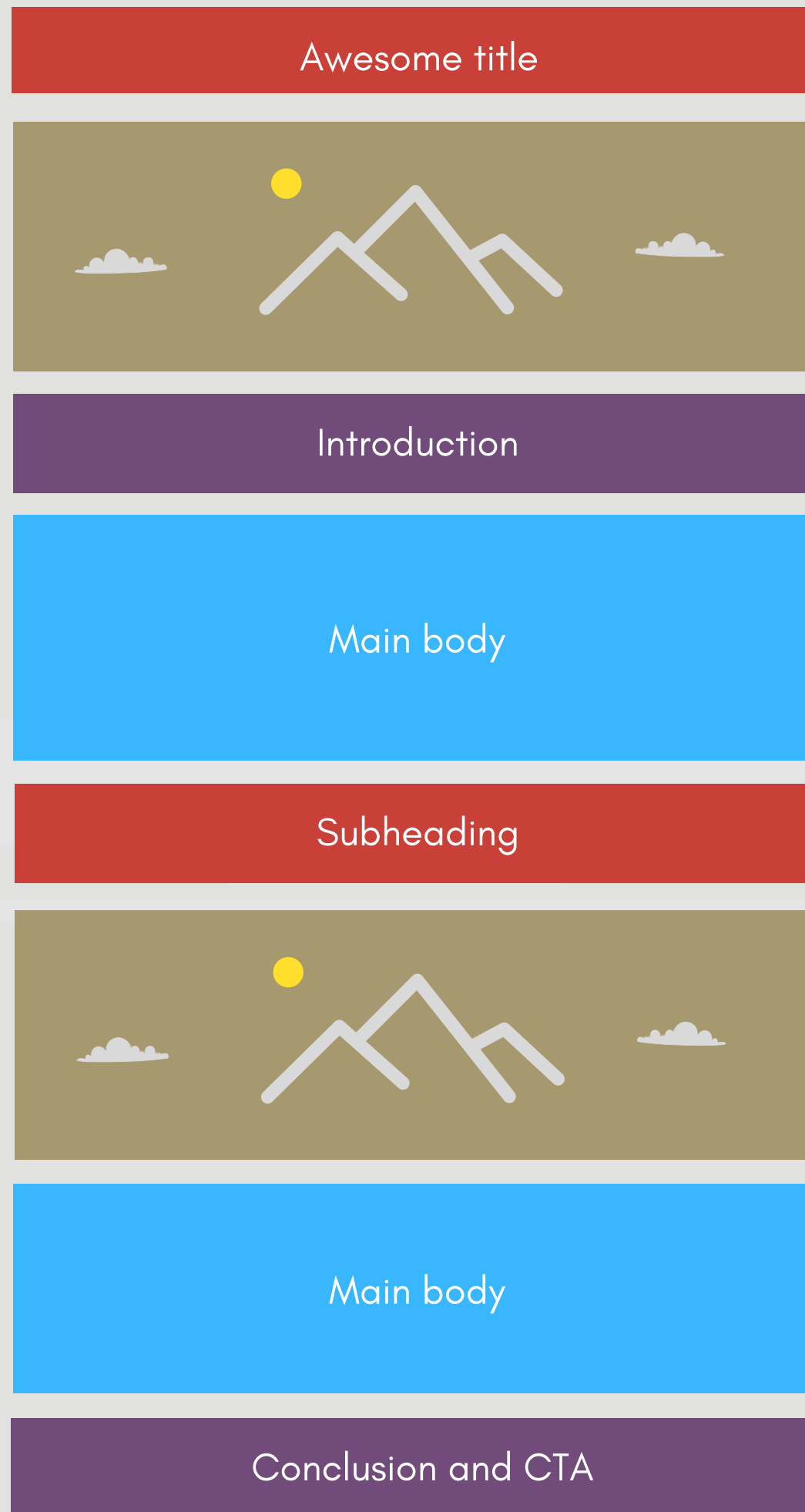
# Language

Use plain English

Write in plain English and steer clear of jargon. Keep it professional but avoid stories sounding stiff and devoid of emotion. We should aim to convey eagerness for conservation to generate engagement and participation.

# The basics

# Anatomy of a perfect news story/article



# Title

More people read the headline than they do the story so make it engaging! It's the first thing people see so it's a vital **chance** to catch their **interest**.

The most catchy titles tend to include:

- Descriptive adjectives
- Keywords
- Numbers
- Tips & promises (e.g. "These hacks will save you an hour in the lab")
- Action words (e.g. "Help us celebrate the European Day of Conservation Restoration")

Aim for **under 55 characters** as this will allow the entire title to fit on a search page.

**Capitalise** the first word and names.



A diagram illustrating the structure of a webpage. A vertical stack of colored boxes represents different sections: a red box for the title, a purple box for the introduction, a light blue box for the main body, a reddish-brown box for the subheading, and a brown box for the footer. The top two boxes (title and introduction) are enclosed in a grey-bordered rectangle. A dotted line starts from the top right of this rectangle and extends horizontally to the right, then turns vertically down to point at the top of the red title box.

Awesome title

Introduction

Main body

Subheading

# Introduction

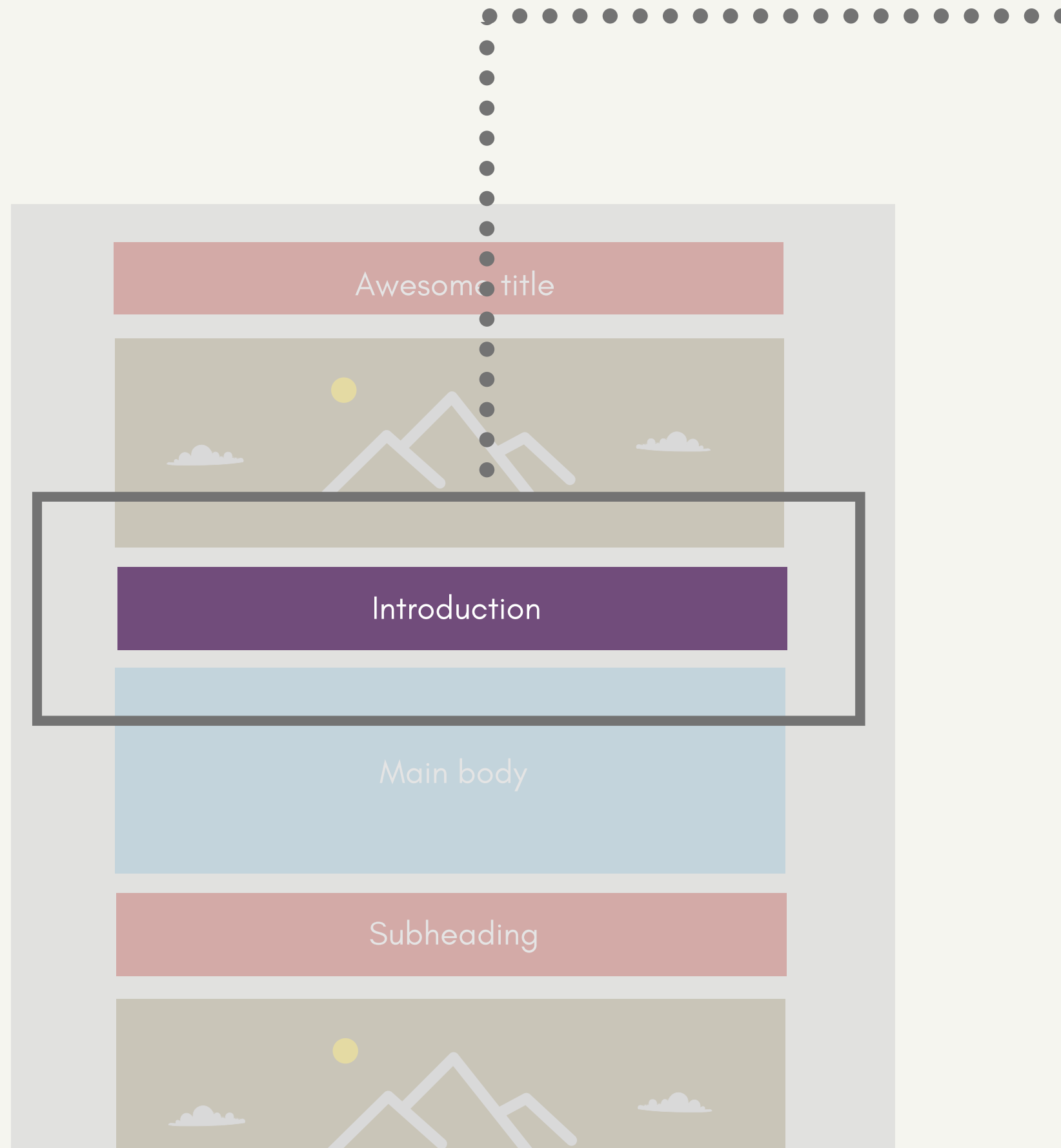
The introduction is another chance to **hook our reader in**. Tell people **why they should read the post** by outlining the **key takeaway**.

Using **anecdotes** in the introduction can increase readership by as much as 300 percent so consider starting with a personal anecdote or quote.

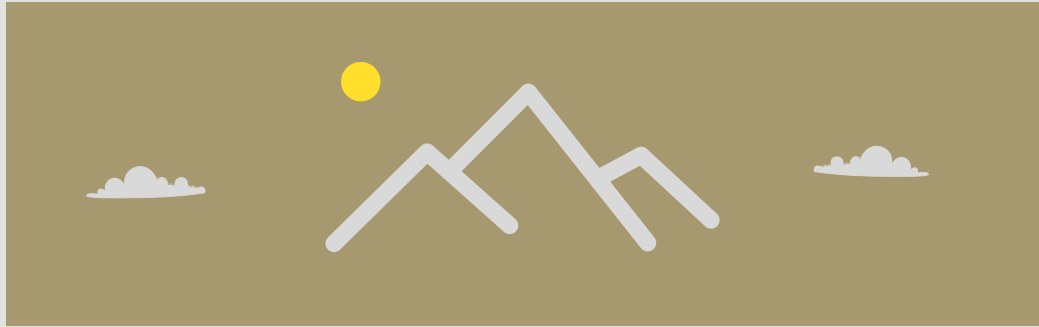
In addition to engaging readers, the introduction should also provide a **sense of what's to come**. It should answer readers' questions upfront:

- What is the post about?
- Why should I read it?
- What will I get from it?

Don't overwrite the introduction - a punchy summary is more effective!



Awesome title



Introduction

Main body

Subheading



Main body

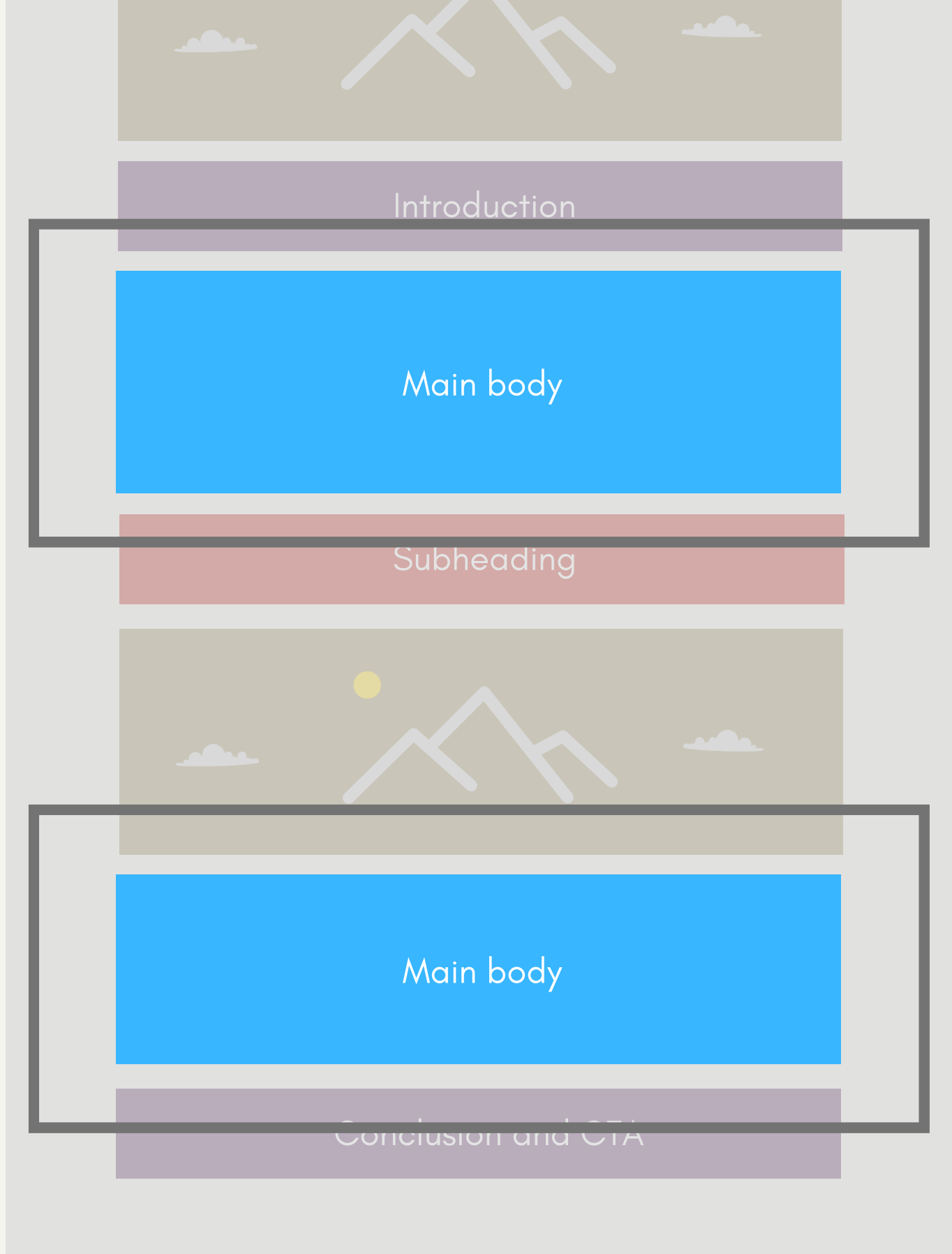
Conclusion and CTA

# Images

Every story must have a **good-quality** and **credited** header image. You should select and send over high-quality images that are relevant to your post if possible. Ideally, aim to include one visual for every 350 words.

Using **your own original image** is best. If you are using someone else's image make sure you have permission to use it and you include appropriate credits.



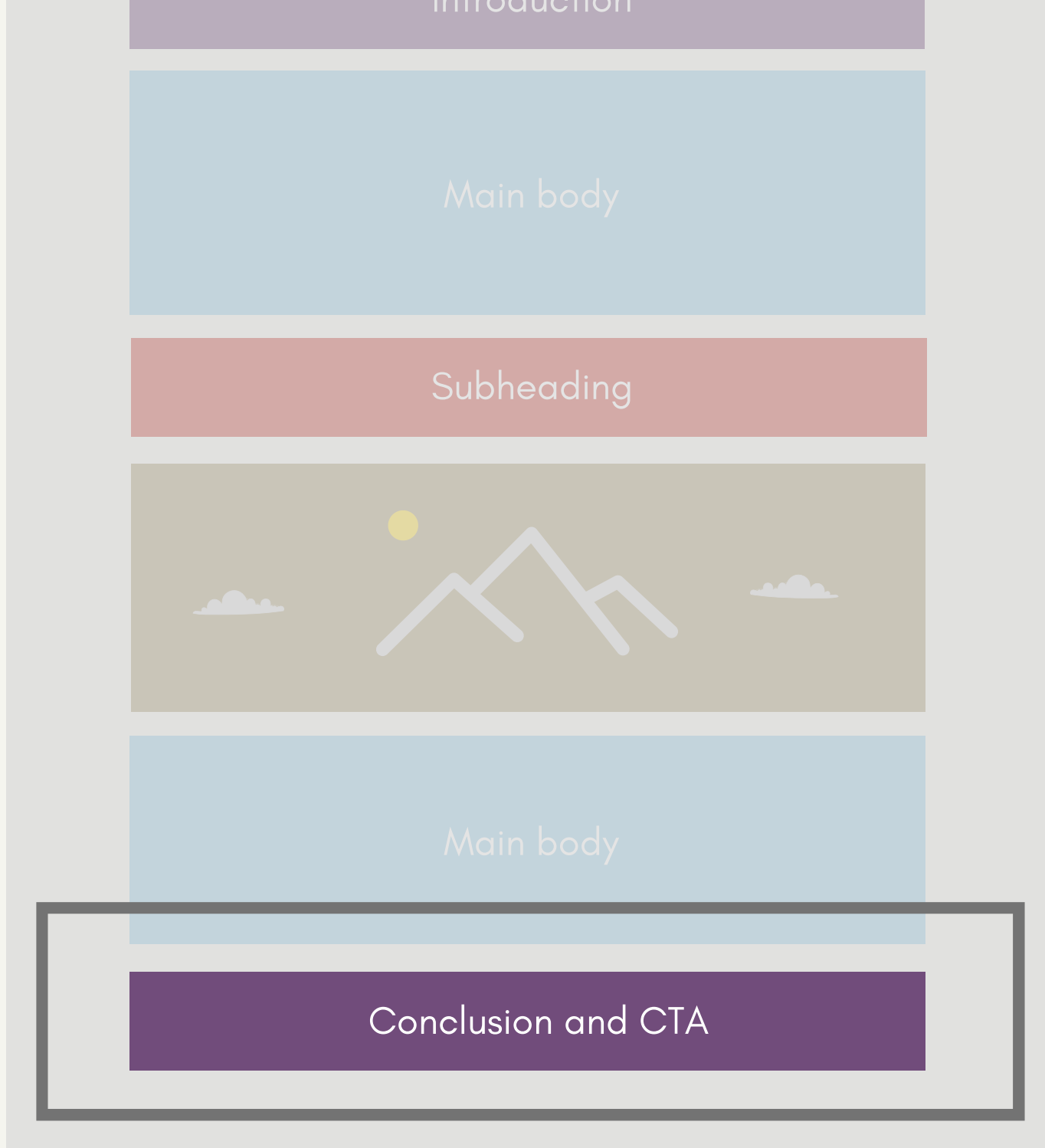


# Body

Deliver the main points of the story in the body of the text.

Avoid being overly verbose. Most people skim read posts so whenever possible, **break up your text** with:

- Subheadings
- Bulleted points and lists
- Visuals like images and charts
- Pull quotes
- Bolded sections



# Conclusion

Don't leave your readers hanging. Wrap up your story with a **short summary** of your main points. Alternatively, end with a final **concluding thought** or **question**.

It's good to include a **Call to Action** here too. For example, to encourage readers to find out more about a project or a Group's activities.

# Examples

Below is a list of **examples of articles** published on the Icon website which you might find helpful:

- [Icon member Alice Watkins: 5 challenges of contemporary art conservation](#) by Alice Watkins
- [A year on, and what a year!](#) by Peter David ACR
- [Things we found in the ground](#) by Abigail Bainbridge ACR
- [Digging deeper: Nigel Williams and Sutton Hoo](#) by Icon Ceramics & Glass Group
- [Icon Trustee Martin Kirke: 6 reasons to invest in conservation now](#) by Martin Kirke
- [Lockdown life in my living room face-covering factory](#) by Heather Porter ACR

# Questions? Ideas?

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