

WRITING CONVERSATIONALLY

#MC3306

Story Planning

- Sort out your facts
 - Numbers, chunks, charts, etc.
- What's the freshest angle? (Remember, it should be present tense)
- What is your best sound?
 - Soundbites often make or break a story, so give them the proper respect in your planning process
- Think of how you want to close the story

Pick Your Words Wisely

- Fancy words belong in an English paper or a NY Times article, not in broadcast stories
- Use short sentences, simple words
- Says, say (not exclaimed, proclaimed, stated, etc.)
- Don't use clichés
 - Mangled mess of metal
 - Pool of blood
 - Parent's worst nightmare
 - Never, ever, ever use the word "blaze" in a story

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 - See?
 - We write differently because we don't talk that way.

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 - Oprah, President Obama, Governor Abbott, Madonna
- Use only the last name on second reference

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 - Don't bog your story down with long titles
 - Valero's Executive Vice President of Corporate Development John Smith
 - Valero executive John Smith

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- Why do we use attribution?
 - Attribution clarifies where you got your information
 - Gives credibility to your story
 - You must always use attribution when dealing with blame or opinion

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- Better: A 3rd grader here in San Marcos is about to see his wish come true. He's going to line up on the football field Saturday with the big boys from Texas State.

What Next?

- Always, always, always read your story aloud
- Record your story and listen back
- Be on the listen for hang-ups in your story
- Read it to your roommate, boyfriend/girlfriend, best friend to get honest feedback
 - Did it make sense?
 - Do they have any questions?
 - Was it clunky?

Words to Avoid

- Precipitation
- Interrogate
- Contribute
- Witness
- Purchase
- Attempt
- Require
- Exhibit
- Transpire
- Intoxicated
- Venture
- Youth
- Abrasion
- Garment
- Sufficient
- Physician
- Passed away
- Utilize
- Terminate
- Attorney