* Writing Workshop

for Video and Audio
Communicate with your EP/producer/editor all day --

*Before you write your story
*Before you edit audio/video
*When you have questions
*When there are new developments

Take ownership of your story
Before You Start Writing

- Do basic research to know your story; read wires/articles/study, make calls
- Why are we doing the story today?
- What’s new? What’s most interesting?
- Do you have both/all sides?
- What video will you use to tell the story?
- What sound will you use? Natural sound?
Sources and Verification

- Don’t make assumptions
- Consider your sources; don’t base a story on one news report unless you attribute to that organization
- Get facts from at least two reliable sources
- When writing about a study, seek out the study and not just summaries, analysis
**Attribution**

When to attribute the source of information:

* based on another outlet’s reporting (e.g. LA Times)
* controversial
* questionable
* partisan
* exclusive
A police captain says a five-year old started the fire when the boy was playing with matches.

A Viterbi professor says students are sleepy in 8 a.m. classes.
Accuracy and Fairness

- Do not plagiarize
- Do not include unsupported statements or information
- Be transparent about what we know and don’t know
- Be sure you do NOT change the meaning of a comment when you shorten/edit the comment
Broadcast Writing Basics

- Short, declarative sentences
- One or two facts per sentence
- Avoid clauses (especially starting a sentence)
- Write conversationally
  * simple sentence structure (subject-verb)
  * “mom rule” - how would you tell mom?
Use the active voice, **not** passive voice

Eliminate wordiness

Use specific, descriptive adjectives, but **not** subjective

Time references:

Yesterday - Today - Tomorrow - Last night
Writing for Audio and Video

- Do not write chronologically; use newest or most interesting information first
- You have one chance to grab attention of listener/viewer
- Identify key fact or two for lead sentence
- Do not end the story on an actuality/sound bite
Writing to video

● View video BEFORE you write
● Identify various shots (protesters marching, signs, closeups of police, etc.)
● Words and video must complement each other
● Avoid ‘wallpaper’ or generic video that does not help tell the story
Choosing Soundbites/Actualities

Soundbites should express:

- interesting facts
- expertise
- partisanship
- different points of view
- emotion
- drama
- witness account
Choosing Soundbites/Actualities

- Make sound bites (SOTs) concise, but enough to convey fact, idea, opinion, emotion
- Note the in and out cues of the sound you like
- Only use sound bites that are audible and understandable
- Avoid profanities
Writing into SOTs/actualities

- Set up the listener/viewer for what they will hear in the sound bite
- Sound bite should pick up where the script leaves off
- Don’t repeat what sound bite says in your script
- The more compelling sound you can use, the better
“I assure you that we will meet these challenges together, directly, decisively and with honesty and candor. This is a moment of responsibility and opportunity, and we will seize them both.”
USC President Carol Folt says she is prepared to lead the university through difficult times.

Clip/SOT: “I assure you that we will meet these challenges together, directly, decisively and with honesty and candor. This is a moment of responsibility and opportunity, and we will seize them both.”
Writing into SOTs/Actualities

For audio, the speaker in the actuality is usually identified BEFORE the soundbite is heard.

For video, it’s important to introduce the speaker by providing his/her title or relevance to the story. (ie. The police officer says… A witness at the scene says…)

**TV Formats and Terms**

**Intro:** Anchor reading *on camera*, often with **OTS** (*over-the-shoulder*) graphic

**Copy story:** Stories that are on camera; no video

**VO:** Voice over; anchor or reporter reads as video plays

**SOT:** Sound on tape; clips of interviews or self-contained natural sound

**Package (Pkg):** Self-contained story with track, video, and sound

**CG:** Text, usually on lower third of screen, that identifies a place or person

**Tag:** Info the anchor reads on camera at end of story

**FS or ANCG:** Full screen graphic
Radio terms

**Actuality (act or ax):** same as SOT (soundbite) in TV

**Cut and Copy (C/C):** read live by the host

**Voicer:** tracked by a reporter with no actualities

**Wrap:** (Wraparound or Spot): edited story with track and actualities

**Host intro:** live host intro to a tracked story
Every video must have locator CG
Every interview SOT must have 2-line CG (name/title)

CLAY HELTON (all uppercase)
USC Head Football Coach (title case, with upper and lower)

Skype interview - use “Skype” CG
Reporters need CG with name and Annenberg Media
NINA JHAVERI
Protest Organizer

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Call your Senators HERE

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