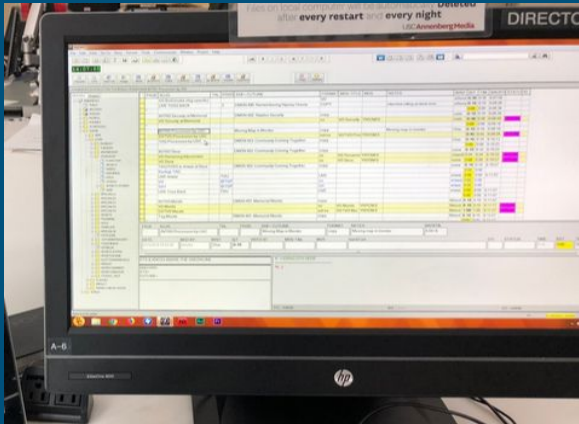




# \* Writing Workshop



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

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- 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

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- 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

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When to attribute the source of information:

- \* based on another outlet's reporting (e.g. LA Times)
- \* controversial
- \* questionable
- \* partisan
- \* exclusive

# Attribution

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Attribution goes first in broadcast:

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

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- 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

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- 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?



# Broadcast Writing Basics

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- 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

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- 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

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Soundbites should express:

interesting facts

emotion

expertise

drama

partisanship

witness account

different points of view

# Choosing Soundbites/Actualities

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

# Writing into SOTs/actualities

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- 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

# Example:

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Clip/SOT of USC President Carol Folt that you've chosen:

“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.”

# Example

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**Script:** 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

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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



Anchor/Host

OTS

Cutline

Studio

# CGs (Chyron Generators)

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- ★ 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



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HERE  
...ole

KAMALA D. HARRIS  
PH: 224-3033

DIANNE FEINSTEIN  
PH: 224-3041

Call your  
Senators HERE

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**NINA JHAVERI**  
Protest Organizer