**Writing for Television**

**Have a great opening line!**

A great opening line along with great video to go with it grabs the viewers’ attention. It should be “BAM!” While you are shooting your story, think about what video you want to start with along with an opening line to go with it.

**Write conversationally!**

Most of what you write for school is “formal” writing. When you write for television, you are using informal writing. You are telling a story; not writing a term paper. Use words and phrases you would use if you were telling a story to a friend!

**Be Clear & Concise!**

When you are reading something and there is a long sentence, if you miss the point, you can go back and re-read it. You can’t do that in television news. It goes by pretty fast. That’s why you have to use short phrases and sentences. Write in **Active Voice**; Not Passive Voice.

Passive: Sally was driven to the store by Ted. Active: Ted drove Sally to the store.

Avoid forms of *to be* and *to have*, such as “she had been driving.” Instead: “She drove.”

**Find good characters & let them tell the story!**

If you have a boring character, your interview will be boring, and so will your story. That means you need to choose wisely. Just because someone is your friend doesn’t mean they will be a good interview.

**Ask the right questions!**

Ask open-ended questions. That means don’t ask anything that a person can answer with a word. If they do, re-ask the question phrased in a different way. Listen to their answers, and ask followup questions. - Again, this is a conversation. When you talk to a friend, you don’t sit there with a list of questions to go through. You ask questions based on what they just said.

**Think Action/Reaction - Just like in video**

As a reporter, you give the **facts.** Let your characters provide the **reaction and emotion**.

How do you get that? Ask the person how it feels or felt to go through a situation. That’s how you get emotion, and more than just the who, what, where, when. As a reporter, you need to know all that information, but it’s the “how” and the “why” that make it interesting. You write the facts in a reporter track that leads into something the interview subject will say. **You should not say the same thing the subject says.** You are leading into it.

**Write to the Video!**

This means your writing should relate to the video. It doesn’t mean you are describing in great deal what everyone can obviously see.

**The End!**

The Closing line is as important as the opening line. You’re wrapping everything up. Ideally, it somehow relates to the beginning. Think about the ending while you are shooting and shoot a couple of possible closing shots