



AI Generated

## **Writing For Mass Communications (Part 3)**

### **Building a Story Checklist**

**By**

**Mark McGee**



You can read the [first part of this series](#) about 'writing for mass communications' here and the [second part here](#). The points I'm sharing are from seminars I taught for radio and television news departments during my career as a news manager.

# Story Checklist

1. Understand and define the story 'before you go out.' It may change, but have focus when you leave. Let a news manager know what you 'expect' from your coverage.
2. Get video that will tell your story for you. LOOK for an opening shot. LISTEN for nat sound (natural sound). LOOK for a shot that would make a good DVE (digital video effect).
3. Find PEOPLE who are affected. Avoid official soundbites unless they are necessary to tell the story. Put subjects in their environment. Mic them as they're doing something they find comfortable.
4. Get the camera INVOLVED. Shoot closeups, sequences, and matched action.
5. Think video while you're writing. This means viewing your tapes first. WRITE TO THE VIDEO YOU HAVE.

6. Soundbites shouldn't tell the story. YOU can tell the story. Soundbites are the exclamation point — the emotion that you CAN'T tell.
7. Always write your lead first. It's important that the anchor demonstrates a command of the story, without parroting what's said in the package.
8. Keep your PRODUCER apprised of the story. Double-check treatment. All scripts must be approved and initialed by the PRODUCER.
9. If you have unusual treatment, such as sports video off the top of a new story, or a non-standard outcue, be sure to bring it to the attention of the producer and director. Also, be sure the script is carefully marked.
10. Your story has aired, but is it over? Always think of possible follow-ups. Write a note and attach it to a copy of the script. Put it in the 'futures' file or give it to the Assignment Editor.

# Next Time

Part four of “Writing for Mass Communications” — *Making Words Work For You.*