

Presentation Handout

*Writing: Double Session*

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Wednesday, September 9, 3:30-5:30 p.m.

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**What NOT to Do:**

1. Have no focus, but simply present 5WHs or a general overview of what people already know
2. Forget to include the 5WHs.
3. Write only one side of a story, or include only your own experience
4. Tell people what they already know.
5. Be boring with no description or interesting angle.
6. Interview only your friends or popular people to include their quotes.
7. Not take notes so you have no detailed information from an event when you write it later.
8. Not have photos to match the story.
9. Include incorrect or inaccurate information.
10. Leave out really important information.

**Let’s talk about Focus:**

1. **Polaroids**: Develop a pivotal moment or image you can use as a theme for your story. This may entail working with the photographer (if that is not you) to shape a story around the pivotal photo being used.
2. **End Goal**: Consider what it is you want this story to accomplish (i.e. what’s its purpose?): to inform, to entertain, to inspire, to eulogize, etc.
3. **Structure:** Determine how the form (i.e. what kind of story) fits the function (i.e. the purpose) to achieve your end goal?

**Let’s talk about Interest**: “How to Say Nothing in 500 Words” by Paul Roberts

1. Avoid the Obvious Content: do not make the focus of the story solely about the obvious.
2. Take the Less Usual Side: consider an interesting perspective.
3. Slip out of Abstraction: be specific!
4. Get Rid of Obvious Padding: Omit Needless Words.
5. Use Colorful Words without being Cheesy: “good, bad, interesting, exciting” are all colorless.