

## Science Writing Workshop: How to tell a story, How to conduct an interview



Organization: Materials Research Society

Contact Person: Judy Meiksin

Contact Information: meiksin@mrs.org

### Opportunities for Science Writing:

Talking points and procedure [numbers reference slides in accompanying PowerPoint file]

1. Introduce yourself and describe your own interest in science writing—depending on whether you are a scientist, involved in formal/informal science education, or are a science enthusiast
2. Why Science Writing?
  - Pace and output: science writing allows you to dive deep into a topic for a short period of time and turn out a product quickly, whether that is a news article, press release, or profile of a scientist.
  - Socioeconomic and political aspect: science writing lets you tackle broader socioeconomic and political concepts, controversies, or outstanding questions that are caused by or benefit from scientific research.
  - Creativity: science writing lets you channel your own writing talents and voice while communicating something beyond your own activities.
3. The techniques we use to communicate depend greatly on the audience—why are you saying what you are saying, and who are you saying it to? Are you trying to convince or persuade your colleagues or your family and friends? Pitch a business idea, or defend your actions? Are you trying to inspire or educate others?  
First determine your audience, and then start to write.
4. For perspective, here are the results from a recent (2011) Pew poll surveying the scientific literacy of American adults. Science writing is needed to help clarify topics of interest to most Americans, such as technology and healthcare.
5. Describes most science writing pieces, along with the audience and purpose.
6. Science writing lies between creative writing and technical writing. You want to be accurate about the details, but keep the reader entertained
7. If you are interested in formal science writing education, here are a few training programs you might consider, and what they (generally) offer.
8. Here are the places you might end up working as a science writer. Freelance writing is a very popular option, as you can live and work wherever you would like and work for a variety of editors.
9. [Include additional examples (good or bad) depending on the time you have and the type of science writing you want to emphasize.] Good sources are university or national laboratory press releases, popular science magazines (WIRED, MIT Technology Review).
10. What is your interest in science writing, and what motivates you in a career? (This slide is meant to start a discussion with the audience/participants).
11. Take questions from the class.



This project was supported by the National Science Foundation under Award No. 0940143. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this program are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Foundation.

Published under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-ShareAlike license:

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/us/>