

## L-Q-T-Q

**Remember the basic formula. Use the LQTQ handout.**

Write a lead that quickly and clearly indicates the focus of the story.

The next paragraph supplies the details and remaining 5Ws.

Next, use a quote from your subject that summarizes the story or provides an additional detail, opinion or emotion.

Write a transition to the next quote or thought.

Use another quote.

And so on ð

## REMEMBER: SHORT PARAGRAPHS

You need a new paragraph for each new idea. Every quote gets its own paragraph.

**No big long blocks of text.**

## MAKING IT BETTER, STEP 1

Run spell-check. Correct typos and spelling errors and obvious grammar errors.

Check names, dates and facts.

Run a word count. If you have 500 words for a 350-word article, that's good. *If you have 200 words, stop right there. You need to do more interviewing before you go on. THINK: What am I missing?*

## MAKING IT BETTER, STEP 2

Read your story out loud.

Stop and mark any place where you stumble, pause, or have to reread.

Take a look at the sentences that your word processor has underlined for grammar errors (that green squiggly line.) Check for a subject and verb in every sentence.

Rewrite every sentence you or the computer marked.

## MAKING IT BETTER, STEP 3 - QUOTES

Reread all your quotes.

Reread your notes for other quotes that might work better or fit better.

Don't have good quotes? *Go back and interview some more.*

Double-check names and spellings. AGAIN.

Add your own observations about what it looked like and sounded like.

## MAKING IT BETTER, STEP 4 – BALANCE AND FAIRNESS

Reread all your quotes.

Do they represent various perspectives, stakeholders, constituents, sides of an issue?

Are all the important points made by the people who are in disagreement?

Double check your own words. Eliminate any personal pronouns not in quotes (we, our, us, my, me, I). Make sure you are not expressing an opinion.

### MAKING IT BETTER, STEP 5 - VERBS

Circle all the .ly words.

Can you take out the adverb without changing the meaning of the sentence? Then do.

Can you improve the sentence with a stronger verb? Use the verb and take out the adverb.

### MAKING IT BETTER, STEP 5 – MORE ON VERBS

Circle all the .ing words and all the instances of %~~is~~+; %~~was~~+or %~~has~~+.

Can you change the verb to an active verb (%~~walked~~+instead of %~~was~~ walking+)

Is the sentence written in active voice?

[Who . did what . to whom]

Can you improve the sentence with a stronger verb? Use it.

### MAKING IT BETTER, STEP 6 - LEAD

Go back and reread your lead. Count the words. If it's over 30, that's way too many. Make it shorter. It should be 15 to 25 words.

Are all of the 5Ws and H covered in the first two or three paragraphs? If not, add what's missing.

Does the lead grab the reader and tell what the story is about? If not, write one that does.

### MAKING IT BETTER, STEP 7 - ENDING

Reread your ending.

Is it a quote that summarizes or adds a twist to the story? Then go on to the final step.

Is it an essay-like conclusion that you wrote yourself? REWRITE it. Try to find a kicker quote. Don't ruin a great news story by editorializing at the end!

### MAKING IT BETTER, STEP 8 FINALLY!

Run spell check again and correct errors.

Run your word count again.

If your word count is close to the word count you were given, your story is ready for a peer edit.

If it's still too long, then go through it again, looking for any place you repeat yourself or where you can say something in fewer words.

If it's still too short, go back to step 3.

### Is your story a GQ STUDS?

- Great Quotes
- Strong start
- Transitions
- Unique angle
- Details and description
- Style and grammar