Writing Lab 3

Unit 3- Feature Writing
February to April
Course Philosophy

Writing Lab III consists of reading, writing, speaking, listening and media literacy skills. During instruction students will learn to use reading strategies that help them become effective readers and research strategies to help them become effective researchers. In addition, students will learn communication strategies including questioning, inferring, visualizing, synthesizing to develop their writing. The principles of news and news writing are leveraged to execute types of journalistic stories through the lab, including news, feature and editorial. The media literacy skills employed will educate students in creating a variety of graphic designs as well as an emphasis on terminology. Journalists are the channels through which information flows and they are the interpreters of events. Through experiential, hands-on learning, students/reporters in Writing Lab III will use critical thinking, understanding and teamwork to create a school publication, covering the topics within a high-school community. By creating a real publication, students will not only acquire real journalist skills, but also learn publication software and technology in the classroom. Moreover, students will have the opportunity to collaborate with industry professionals and take part in internship programs, using real life professionals as models to motivate students to reach their goals. Students will research, organize, and verify information for accuracy, objectivity and relevancy. They will develop creative ideas to present this information, and organize their work to meet deadlines. They will also market their publication in the school and in the larger community. The course is planned around universal themes and essential questions to encourage students to engage in deep meaningful discussions to socialize intelligence. The workshop model is employed so that all students can improve their skills and voice as writers. The teachers are trained and will instruct students using the workshop model philosophy with the use of the “I DO, WE DO, YOU DO” method of instruction. The Standards are designed to provide a clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them. The standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young learners need for success in college and careers. It is our goal to establish a community of learners to become productive citizens in society striving towards pursuing their life-long goals. Through an enriching and rigorous education and with on-going support our students will be fully prepared for the future and to compete successfully in the global economy.

http://www.state.nj.us/education/modelcurriculum/ela/
## Pacing Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>NJSLS</th>
<th>Each Unit is 9 weeks in Length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 1</strong></td>
<td>News &amp; News Writing</td>
<td>W.11-12.4, RL.11-12.2, RL.9-10.1, L.9-10.3.a, W.9-10.1.d, RL.11-12.6, 8, CPI 9.4.12.C.(2).5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 3</strong></td>
<td>Feature Writing</td>
<td>W.11-12.7; RI.9-10.5; CPI 9.4.12.C.(2).1, 6, RI.9-10.5; RI.9-10.6; W.11-12.7, 8; CPI 9.4.12.C.(2).6</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 4</strong></td>
<td>Editorial Writing</td>
<td>RI.9-10.7; RI.9-10.8; W.11-12.8, W.11-12.7; CPI 9.4.12.C.(2).6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Methods of Instruction

Teacher Coaching

Individual and collaborative problem-solving & decision-making

Individual Instruction

Small group instruction

Peer tutoring

Guest Speakers

Training manuals and Online tutorials

Writing to learn

Making thinking visible

Note-taking

Establishing metacognitive reflection & articulation as a regular pattern in learning

Diagrams, charts, visuals and graphs

Model (I Do), Guided Practice (We Do),
Independent Practice (You Do)
### Educational Technology

**Standards**


- **Technology Operations and Concepts**
  - Construct a spreadsheet, enter data, and use mathematical or logical functions to manipulate data, generate charts and graphs, and interpret the results.
  - Produce and edit a multi-page document for a commercial or professional audience using desktop publishing and/or graphics software.

- **Creativity and Innovation**
  - Design and pilot a digital learning game to demonstrate knowledge and skills related to one or more content areas or a real world situation.

- **Communication and Collaboration**
  - Develop an innovative solution to a complex, local or global problem or issue in collaboration with peers and experts, and present ideas for feedback in an online community.

- **Research and Information Literacy**
  - Predict the impact on society of unethical use of digital tools, based on research and working with peers and experts in the field.

- **Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, Decision Making**
  - Select and use specialized databases for advanced research to solve real-world problems.

- **The Designed World**
  - Analyze the interactions among various technologies and collaborate to create a product or system demonstrating their interactivity.
Career Ready Practices
Standards
CRP2, CRP4, CRP5, CRP6, CRP7, CRP8, CRP10, CRP11, CRP12

- **CRP2. Apply appropriate academic and technical skills.**
  Career-ready individuals readily access and use the knowledge and skills acquired through experience and education to be more productive. They make connections between abstract concepts with real-world applications, and they make correct insights about when it is appropriate to apply the use of an academic skill in a workplace situation.

- **CRP4. Communicate clearly and effectively and with reason.**
  Career-ready individuals communicate thoughts, ideas, and action plans with clarity, whether using written, verbal, and/or visual methods. They communicate in the workplace with clarity and purpose to make maximum use of their own and others’ time. They are excellent writers; they master conventions, word choice, and organization, and use effective tone and presentation skills to articulate ideas. They are skilled at interacting with others; they are active listeners and speak clearly and with purpose. Career-ready individuals think about the audience for their communication and prepare accordingly to ensure the desired outcome.

- **CRP5. Consider the environmental, social and economic impacts of decisions.**
  Career-ready individuals understand the interrelated nature of their actions and regularly make decisions that positively impact and/or mitigate negative impact on other people, organization, and the environment. They are aware of and utilize new technologies, understandings, procedures, materials, and regulations affecting
Career Ready Practices

the nature of their work as it relates to the impact on the social condition, the environment and the profitability of the organization.

- **CRP6. Demonstrate creativity and innovation.**
  Career-ready individuals regularly think of ideas that solve problems in new and different ways, and they contribute those ideas in a useful and productive manner to improve their organization. They can consider unconventional ideas and suggestions as solutions to issues, tasks or problems, and they discern which ideas and suggestions will add greatest value. They seek new methods, practices, and ideas from a variety of sources and seek to apply those ideas to their own workplace. They take action on their ideas and understand how to bring innovation to an organization.

- **CRP7. Employ valid and reliable research strategies.**
  Career-ready individuals are discerning in accepting and using new information to make decisions, change practices or inform strategies. They use reliable research process to search for new information. They evaluate the validity of sources when considering the use and adoption of external information or practices in their workplace situation.

- **CRP8. Utilize critical thinking to make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.**
  Career-ready individuals readily recognize problems in the workplace, understand the nature of the problem, and devise effective plans to solve the problem. They are aware of problems when they occur and take action quickly to address the problem; they thoughtfully investigate the root cause of the problem prior to
introducing solutions. They carefully consider the options to solve the problem. Once a solution is agreed upon, they follow through to ensure the problem is solved, whether through their own actions or the actions of others.

- **CRP11. Use technology to enhance productivity.**

Career-ready individuals find and maximize the productive value of existing and new technology to accomplish workplace tasks and solve workplace problems. They are flexible and adaptive in acquiring new technology. They are proficient with ubiquitous technology applications. They understand the inherent risks—personal and organizational—of technology applications, and they take actions to prevent or mitigate these risks.

- **CRP12. Work productively in teams while using cultural global competence.**

Career-ready individuals positively contribute to every team, whether formal or informal. They apply an awareness of cultural difference to avoid barriers to productive and positive interaction. They find ways to increase the engagement and contribution of all team members. They plan and facilitate effective team meetings.
### Differentiated Instruction

**Accommodate Based on Students Individual Needs: Strategies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Time/General</strong></th>
<th><strong>Processing</strong></th>
<th><strong>Comprehension</strong></th>
<th><strong>Recall</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extra time for assigned tasks</td>
<td>Extra Response time</td>
<td>Precise step-by-step directions</td>
<td>Teacher-made checklist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjust length of assignment</td>
<td>Have students verbalize steps</td>
<td>Short manageable tasks</td>
<td>Use visual graphic organizers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timeline with due dates for reports and projects</td>
<td>Repeat, clarify or reword directions</td>
<td>Brief and concrete directions</td>
<td>Reference resources to promote independence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication system between home and school</td>
<td>Mini-breaks between tasks</td>
<td>Provide immediate feedback</td>
<td>Visual and verbal reminders</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide lecture notes/outline</td>
<td>Provide a warning for transitions</td>
<td>Small group instruction</td>
<td>Graphic organizers</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reading partners</td>
<td>Emphasize multi-sensory learning</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Assistive Technology</strong></th>
<th><strong>Tests/Quizzes/Grading</strong></th>
<th><strong>Behavior/Attention</strong></th>
<th><strong>Organization</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Computer/whiteboard</td>
<td>Extended time</td>
<td>Consistent daily structured routine</td>
<td>Individual daily planner</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tape recorder</td>
<td>Study guides</td>
<td>Simple and clear classroom rules</td>
<td>Display a written agenda</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spell-checker</td>
<td>Shortened tests</td>
<td>Frequent feedback</td>
<td>Note-taking assistance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Audio-taped books</td>
<td>Read directions aloud</td>
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<td>Color code materials</td>
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Interdisciplinary Connections

*Model interdisciplinary thinking to expose students to other disciplines.*

Interdisciplinary Connections:

The Journalism interdisciplinary concentration will teach you how to collect and write information regarding current events and trends, issues and people for publication in a newspaper, magazine or Web site. The curriculum emphasizes writing skills, but you will also learn about research, interviewing, editing, layout and design, and legal and ethical issues in journalism. A good journalist is one who is broadly educated. You are encouraged to enhance your education by pursuing interests in another discipline. For example, learning a foreign language might be the key to your career success. Do you want to pursue photojournalism or advertising layout? You should explore classes in the digital arts department. Are you deeply concerned about environmental issues? You might consider a minor in environmental studies. With an outside focus on economics or political science, your career opportunities would expand in those areas. As a journalism student, your academic and professional horizons are limited only by your imagination.
Methods of Assessment

Participation:
- Brainstorming sessions
- Critiques
- Verification
- Attendance at and reporting on school events
- Conferencing
- Peer review

Performance assessments:
- Instructor’s observation of proper tool and material use
- Research assignments for feature articles
- Achievement of Civic and social standards through demonstrated workplace skills

Portfolio Assessment - Portfolio consists of:
- Feature articles
- Design rough drafts
- Completed/proofed pages and spreads as assigned
- Completed departmental assignments, including, but not limited to, interviews, information sheets and planning guides
- Photography from events for feature story
- Any copy written for sections
### Essential Focus Questions:

- What are the journalistic styles of reporting and writing that are required to best represent different types of feature stories?
- What are the different types of journalist feature articles?
- What are feature leads and the different types, and how do you execute such leads?
- How do I ensure that my researching and reporting are verifiable and factual?
- How is a feature article different from other types of stories (News? Editorials?)
- What is the process for creating a feature article—from research to drafting to publishing?
- How does a reporter prepare thoroughly prepare for an interview? What public speaking and note-taking skills are necessary for successful interviewing?

### Outcomes:

- Students will read and analyze a variety of types of feature and editorial stories?
- Students will create a variety of feature and editorial articles for class and publication
- Students will conduct research necessary for feature and editorial writing, including writing interview questions.
- Students will research impactful editorial writers.
- Students will complete mock interviews before completing field interviews.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Learning Objectives</th>
<th>Skills, Strategies &amp; Concepts</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NJSL:</td>
<td>Students will understand how feature stories are different than news stories and will be written, including the following terms:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W.11-12.7, 8 RI.9-10.5, 6 CPI 9.4.12.C.(2).1, 6</td>
<td>Feature Lead, Kicker</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Nut Graph, Inverted pyramid style</td>
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<td>Hour Glass Style Narrative style</td>
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<td>Anecdotal Lead Beat</td>
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<td>Transition Hard News vs. Soft News</td>
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<td>Two-Source Rule Direct Quotation</td>
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<td>Indirect Quotation Partial Quotations</td>
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<td>Summary Lead 5 W’s and H</td>
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<td>Students will write articles in a wide variety of styles for various purposes and specific audiences.</td>
<td>Students will select and use an appropriate journalistic style for writing to inform, entertain, persuade, and transmit cultural context and climate that includes:</td>
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<td>□ strong leads with stories based on observations</td>
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<td>□ short, focused sentences and paragraphs</td>
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<td>□ varied word usage and descriptive vocabulary</td>
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<td>□ active voice verbs</td>
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<td>□ specific word choice to avoid jargon and vague language</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ effective headlines</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ strong interview techniques and research</td>
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<td>□ citation of sources</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Learning Objectives</td>
<td>Skills, Strategies &amp; Concepts</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NJSLS:</strong></td>
<td>➢ Students will develop types of features: personality, news, human interest, occasional piece, historical feature, informative, seasonal, consumer report, how-to article, behind-the-scenes, shared experience, background.</td>
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<tr>
<td>RI.9-10.5, 6 RI.9-10.6</td>
<td>➢ Students will cover an event at school (their beat) and use their research, interview and observation skills to begin their specific feature story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W.11-12.7, 8 CPI 9.4.12.C.(2).6</td>
<td>➢ Understand and demonstrate feature writing techniques including:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students will write features articles</td>
<td>➢ Develop the meanings of four of the “w” words – who, what, when, and where, using examples in oral language and in text.</td>
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<td>➢ Read the first sentence of a news story to students. Give students cards with the “w” words on them. Ask them to hold up the right card when they hear their word used in the story.</td>
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<td>➢ Ask students to use the newspaper to find words and pictures that describe each “w” word.</td>
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<td>➢ Place them under the correct heading on a chart.</td>
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<td>➢ Develop an awareness of the text structure of a news story.</td>
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<td>➢ Demonstrate the inverted pyramid on a news story.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>➢ Ask students to draw an inverted pyramid over several news stories.</td>
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<td>➢ Discover the answers to who, what, where, when within the triangles.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>➢ Have students suggest the why or how of the story.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>➢ Understand and identify the different types of sports writing (examples).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Write a sports article.</td>
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RESOURCES FOR UNIT #3


**Websites**

The Career and Technical Education Partnership of New Jersey (CTEP) [http://careertechpartners.org/](http://careertechpartners.org/)

Media Smarts [http://mediasmarts.ca/](http://mediasmarts.ca/)


Brooks Journalism [http://brooksjournalism.files.wordpress.com/2011/02/top10tips_in_sportswriting1.ppt](http://brooksjournalism.files.wordpress.com/2011/02/top10tips_in_sportswriting1.ppt)
Writing Feature Stories Lesson Plan

Feature stories are different from news stories in several ways. They generally are not late-breaking news, but cover subjects that are timely. They often present another way of looking at a current event. Feature stories do not follow the inverted pyramid style of writing. They may be written in different styles – and at times use a first- or second-person approach. Feature stories are “people”-oriented. They cover topics such as social trends, health and wellness, fashion, food, “slice of life” views of situations, travel stories, consciousness-raising stories, personality profiles and “behind the headline” stories. They are more descriptive than news stories.

- Have students refer back to the News Story they wrote in Unit 1 to highlight the differences between a News Story and a Feature Story.

Student Learning Goals:
- Identify the characteristics of feature writing.
- Discover the differences between feature writing and news writing.
- Select feature topics for the class newspaper.
- Write a feature story.

Before you start:
- Help students think about interesting topics that might make good feature stories.
- Ask students to suggest topics about current ideas or situations that interest them.
- Write suggestions on the board.
- Have students select the three topics they think would be most popular with many readers.

Learning Activities:
- Explain the differences between feature stories and news stories.
- Read examples of each to the children. Discuss similarities and differences.
- Ask children to tell a story in feature story format.
- Guide students to select an appropriate topic for their feature stories. List some of the ideas on the board.
Learning Activities:
1. Compare news writing and feature writing. Establish the following comparison:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENT</th>
<th>BEGINNING</th>
<th>MIDDLE</th>
<th>ENDING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NEWS</td>
<td>STORY</td>
<td>5Ws</td>
<td>NEWSWORTHY 4 Ws W &amp; H W &amp; H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEATURE</td>
<td>STORY</td>
<td>NARRATIVE OR EXPOSITORY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INFORMATION</td>
<td>CATCHY, EXCITING SEQUENCES</td>
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<td></td>
<td>REACHES CONCLUSION</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

2. Divide students into groups. Have the groups locate feature stories in the newspaper. Remind them that news stories and opinion columns are not feature stories.

3. Ask students to share findings; list topics of the features on the board.

4. Let students read the opening paragraphs of several feature stories. Compare these with the lead paragraphs of news stories.

5. Have students locate and share examples of such feature writing techniques as descriptive words and phrases, colorful language, idioms, or first- and second-person viewpoints.
SAMPLE ACTIVITIES/LESSON STARTERS

**Journal or Blog Lesson Plan**

- Read newspaper and magazine articles of varying complexities.
- Analyze and evaluate stories for news elements, accuracy, balance, fairness, proper attribution and truthfulness or credibility.
- Notice and comment on form, shape, and style of writing.
- Appreciate and notice the use of language precision and, when appropriate, humor of reporters.

Students will create a personal blog (using free blogging software) or use a pen & paper journal (if technology access is limited).

**Directions:**
1. Each day you will visit an approved news site and quickly browse the news to select the top three news stories (in your opinion).
2. Once you have your stories, go to your blog and start a new post (include the date in post title).
3. In your post list the top three news stories (headline only), and select one to analyze and identify the news elements. In your analysis, comment on the lead, the organization and the writing style. In addition to identifying the news elements, provide a brief explanation for your choices.

**Approved news sources:**

- USA Today: http://www.usatoday.com
- CNN: http://www.cnn.com
- NBC News: http://www.nbcnews.com/
- ABC News: http://abcnews.go.com/
- News and Observer: http://www.newsobserver.com/

Additional resources at http://www.schooljournalism.org/
1. Write about players and teams, not about games. When school papers come out once every four to six weeks, stories about individual games a month earlier serve little purpose and in fact are a waste of space. You can write about groups of games in one story, but look for trends or common threads: Strong defense? Injuries? Unexpected stars? EXCEPTION: The school’s biggest rivalry, or a regional or state championship match, could merit its own story, although not overly long.

2. When writing about players, always identify them by class in school and position on team. Don’t say “John Smith” when you can say “senior tackle John Smith,” and don’t say “Sue Jones” when you can say “sophomore goalkeeper Sue Jones.” And don’t use double-digit numbers to refer to either grade in school or year of graduating class.

3. Keep up with team statistics and use them frequently in stories. Find out who keeps the scorebooks for various sports, and review the stats often. Also, always know where your team ranks in the conference, district, region and state, based on records and/or local polls, but tell the reader when the ranking was noted (“As of late October…” “With half the season in the books…”)

4. Keep up with individual statistics and use them frequently in stories. If a player sets or ties a school or local record, note it in a story. Maybe highlight it as its own story. Be sure your coaches and/or athletic director inform you when an athlete or team ties or breaks a record.

5. Know sports writing style: scores are numerals separated by hyphens (12-6, not 12 to 6); team records are numerals separated by hyphens (8-2, not 8 and 2); winning scores always come first, even if your school did not win the contest (your team lost 12-6, not 6-12). Spell your opponents’ school name and nickname or mascot correctly. Use sports terms that apply to specific sports occasionally. You do not have to define them. However, don’t use words or phrases that are obscure or not widely known.

6. Make sure your sports stories are the last stories turned in before deadline. This is so the stories can contain the most up-to-date records, standings, etc. If you refer to a team’s record, always insert a disclaimer that indicates to the reader when the story was written (“The team’s record as of late October…” “The conference record going into the final week of the season…”)

7. If you are writing about a team, watch the team practice and watch the team play. You must be present to know what happened, and you must take notes on what you are watching. You cannot write a good sports story on the basis of what someone tells you from memory. And you must be willing to spend some time after the matches to talk to participants.
8. If you are doing a profile on an athlete, watch that person at practice and watch that person in competition. See above.

9. Look for opportunities to do sports feature stories that are not tied directly to games. These might include stories about student trainers, the pre-season tryout process, different coaching philosophies, different training regimens and typical practices, seniors playing in their last games, why benchwarmers persist in trying out for teams when they know they won’t get much playing time. Also, write about students who excel in outside sports (club soccer).

10. Sports writing can be more flexible than news or feature writing, but remember that even in sports writing a clear distinction exists between reporting and commenting. If you are writing your own opinion about a team or a sport or a sports issue, that is commentary. If you are writing an article about how the team is doing, or a profile on an athlete, remain as objective as possible.

**SPORTSWRITING RULE:**

- NEVER be a cheerleader for your teams on the sports pages.
- NEVER write about “our” team, write about “the” team.
- NEVER congratulate a team or an athlete in your sports stories.
- NEVER end a story like this: “The Fighting Lions will undoubtedly be the winners and will achieve anything they set out to do. So let’s all go out and support the Lions!!”

Additional resources at [http://brooksjournalism.files.wordpress.com/2011/02/top10tips_in_sports_writing1.ppt](http://brooksjournalism.files.wordpress.com/2011/02/top10tips_in_sports_writing1.ppt)