**Pre-writing and Researching for a News Article**

Deadline: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

The first order of business as a journalist is to actually *have* a story. But **where** and **how** do they get them?

1. Every journalist has a *system* that works for them, but here are some ideas. Make a list in your Curiosita’ notebook:
   1. Start with YOU…
      1. Listen…
         1. What is everyone talking about?
         2. What bothers others?
      2. Eyes Wide Open…
         1. What do you observe in your community that is good/needs fixing?
         2. Look for ordinary people (or groups) who do extraordinary things OR
         3. Extraordinary accomplishments and find out who did them.
      3. Read, read, read! What is in the news right now? Think of a different angle (Example – affect on young people)
   2. Talk with Others!
      1. Topic Showdown: Brainstorm around a single topic. For example, a discussion about the school cafeteria could lead to stories on the nutritional values of the food, whether accommodations are made for vegetarians, the hard work that cafeteria workers do for generally low wages, the selling of sodas and restaurant chain food in the cafeteria, efforts to recycle, waste of food, etc.

*Possible topics* – fashion, safety, technology, diet, ALPHA, houses, holidays, hunger

* + 1. Nag, Nag, Nag/Why, Why, Why?: Build on an offhand comment like, "Biology class is so boring." Keep asking "why?" Interesting story angles will tumble out, such as outdated books, an overcrowded class, no labs, no funds for field trips, etc.

*Possible nags/whys*: “Why do I have to get up so early?” “Why do I have to do chores?” “Why are movies so expensive?”

* + 1. What did you do over the weekend?: Jot down anything related to your friends’ or your activities.
    2. Extra, Extra! Read All About It!: Peruse a section of the newspaper…which ones got the most interest?
  1. Other places to get stories:
     1. Friends and family
     2. City Council
     3. School Board
     4. Community Centers
     5. Local libraries
     6. Performing arts venues
     7. Local businesses

1. Narrow it Down:
   1. Which one(s) are most newsworthy? Circle:

timeliness proximity conflict and controversy human interest relevance

* 1. Circle three articles that interest you.
  2. Is researching this article well even possible? If so, in general, how would you go about it?

1. Research: Good reporters enjoy digging into a story. **Write down/record everything, keep a list of ALL sources.** However, keep in mind that if you do your research correctly, you will write much, much less than you know. The business says, “Write 10 percent of what you know.”
   1. Begin reading and collecting articles on your subject.
   2. Talk to friends and family about your subject.
   3. Contact any agencies or associations with interest or professional knowledge in the area.
   4. Create a list of people you want to interview; cover all major sides of the story by interviewing each stakeholder.
   5. Collect statistics and old reports on your subject to use as background.

Now, you are ready to begin writing. See “My News Article: The Rest of the Process” about drafting, revising, editing, and publishing your paper.

1. Read “Basic News Writing” article: Complete Structure and Digging Deeper Activity to truly understand the structure.
2. Pre-write/Plan: Four square and rubric review.
3. Write It!: Just write it. Keep writing. Don’t quit. Write some more. Don’t worry about details or mechanics.
4. Revise It!: (Or, never-fall-in-love-with-your-first (or second, or third)-draft approach…) (See Revision Directions)
5. Polish and Make it Shine: Edit with Express Checkout (See directions)
6. Self-Assess and revise again if needed.
7. Publish on ANN: