



Ready. Set.
BOOK IT!

Summer Workshop Copy Writing

Two basic ways to write copy:

1. Develop the lead and then emphasize the five Ws and H with the body of the copy.
2. Develop the lead and alternate transitions and quotes.

The lead-body-conclusion approach:

The lead-body-conclusion approach emphasizes facts over quotes.

- **Lead:** A short paragraph that captures reader interest and promotes unique angle
- **Body:** Answers the five Ws and H, supporting those answers with quotes
- **Conclusion:** A summary paragraph that refers back to lead

Lead-quote-transition approach:

The lead-quote-transition model emphasizes great quotes, using sources' words to drive the direction of the story.

- **Lead:** Obvious introduction
- **Quote:** Sets tone of the story and humanizes the subject
- **Transition:** Bridges quotes and provides new facts
- **Conclusion:** Leaves reader with a sense of closure

Examples of leads:

- **Astonisher:** Presents an unexpected image. For example – You may be dead tomorrow.
- **Background:** When background information is more important than the individuals who participated in an event, begin with this information. For example – For the past seven years, StuCo has hosted a canned food drive.
- **Exclamatory:** Similar to a caption lead-in, an exclamatory lead works like another headline, drawing the reader into the story. For example – State Champions!
- **Quotation:** If you have an amazing quote that introduces the topic and is self-contained and self-explanatory, a quote can be an enticing lead.
- **Question:** For example – Are you feeling incurably lazy?

- **Descriptive:** A descriptive lead uses strong verbs and specific nouns to paint a picture and set a scene.
- **Contrast:** A lead that presents the contrast between two things. For example – Last year's losing season and this year's state championship can create a sharp and vivid lead.

Transition words:

- **Show time:** then, meanwhile, shortly, thereafter, afterward, now, later, all this time, at last, finally, first, while, beyond, next, again
- **Cite examples:** for instance, thus, for example, to illustrate, in fact
- **Indicate emphasis:** in particular, in addition to, furthermore, therefore, indeed, still, nearly
- **Show viewpoint:** however, nevertheless, in another way, in contrast, in general, not only, in other words, on the contrary

Finding sources:

- Sources are everywhere; you just have to pay attention and ask questions.
- When you're at school, pay attention to what people are talking about in the cafeteria and what topics in the classroom seem to spark student interest. Listen to morning announcements; read posters around school; attend club meetings; keep issues of school newspapers; use secretaries, administrators, staff and faculty as reference people.
- Consider conducting student surveys about television, habits, movies, plays, songs, trends and fashions and ask students to react to local, state, national and international news.

Part 1

"Tell me a story..." is a great phrase to keep on hand during an interview. Asking the subject to tell you a story about a specific topic makes the subject feel comfortable and often results in humorous stories and anecdotes that will make your yearbook stories more interesting. Choose one of the following prompts to collect information from a partner about an event in his or her life. Take notes. Make sure to write down great quotes word for word.

Sports – Tell me a story about...

- Being on the bottom of the football pileup
- The closest score you overcame
- Losing an important game



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- Riding in the athletes' bus to an away game
- Running in bad weather
- Crossing the finish line second
- Overcoming a physical challenge
- The worst competition you have in your conference
- Your best friend on your team
- How the coach motivates you on the field

Student Life – Tell me a story about...

- A recent shopping trip
- Driving to school
- Riding in a car pool
- The first date you had this year
- Choosing/buying a prom dress or renting a tuxedo
- Getting to work on time after school
- Cooking dinner for your family
- Something fun you and your sibling did together after school
- Going on your first job interview
- The worst movie you saw this year
- Being seen with your parents at the mall

Academics – Tell me a story about...

- Acting out a play in class
- Getting a test back with a less-than-great grade
- Studying with a group
- Preparing a group presentation
- Giving a speech in class
- Reading literature and understanding it
- Visiting a math tutor
- Going on a field trip
- Finishing a project the night before it's due in class
- Renting a movie instead of reading the book
- A baffling chemistry experiment
- Sitting in assigned seats

Organizations – Tell me a story about...

- Getting wet at the annual car wash
- Going on a field trip related to your organization
- Any special speakers that inspired you
- Getting organized for the group picture

- Why you are in the organization
- Any funny thing that happened at the spring banquet
- Electing officers
- Decorating for a banquet/social event
- An especially frantic fund-raiser
- Going to competition

Part 2

Take a look at the following examples of copy writing. A well-written lead begins each story with strength and purpose and helps establish the angle for the piece. A carefully constructed first paragraph allows the rest of the story to fall into place and actually makes it easier to write.

From 2012 *Wings*, Arrowhead Christian Academy, Redlands, Calif.

Zombie slaying. Near-death experiences. Intense YouTube browsing. All in a day's work for Collin Callahan, Christian Davis and Jake Naman. (Or is it a night's work?)

"Our bro nights are an explosion of fun," Davis said. "They vary depending on whose house we go to. But they usually involve longboarding, video games, and copious amounts of Dr Pepper. We used to stay up all night, but we've gotten old and frail. Now we're asleep by 3 or 4 a.m."

"My house is the best for movie-watching," Callahan said. "We're kind of film critics. Our two genres are horror and anything from the '80s."

Davis' smirk grew into a full-on smile as he recounted their adventures.

"We and Austin Jorritsma almost got beat up while longboarding through the ghetto," he said. "I was ready to call 9-1-1, but we escaped – narrowly."

"I was on the other side of the street, so I pretended I didn't even know them," Naman said.

"Yeah, Jake's definitely the Judas of the group," Davis said.

Naman shrugged.

Back at the "man cave," they get into heavy discussions ranging from girls to the zombie apocalypse. All within the confines of "bro trust," of course.

"Bro trust is the pinnacle of our friendship," Davis said. "Basically, it's the assurance that whatever you say won't be leaked to anyone. It's only been broken three times in history. Not too bad."

Callahan and Davis became best friends in eighth grade. By freshman year, Naman joined the broship, too.

"Jake and Christian have become practically brothers," Callahan said. "Well, as close to brothers as biologically possible."

"One time, we hung out for a week straight," Davis said. "Then we had a bro Sabbath. You know, a break from the bros. But we haven't gone more than three days without at least texting."

"I have a feeling we'll stay friends through college," Davis said. "We have too many good times to let them all go to waste."

From *Cambia*, Oak Park High School, Kansas City, Mo.

There's the old cliché of twins switching places in class to fool their teachers; French teachers pulled the same trick. French teacher Nicole King and North Kansas City High School French teacher Chad Lower felt their students and their own teaching skills could benefit from a day in another's shoes. For one day, each teacher taught the other's classes.

Students had much to say:

Oak Park French teacher Nicole King:

"She teaches the majority of the class in French and then switches to English for the last 30 minutes of class." –junior Marvin Byas

"She spoke slower and more clearly so that we could pick things up easier. She also used more verbs and vocabulary words when she spoke." –junior Emma Kitelinger

"She's more lenient so when we need help she will switch to English to help us during class." –sophomore Natalie Holmgren

North Kansas City High School French teacher Chad Lower:

"He bounced back and forth from French to English and that really kept us on our toes." –Byas

"He talked a lot faster which made it harder to understand and we played a lot of games, learning mainly history stuff." –Kitelinger

"He had a lot of different teaching styles and it was good to learn from a different perspective." –Holmgren



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Part 3

Write a lead-quote-transition story from your “Tell me a story...” interview.

Lead:

Quote:

Transition:

Quote:

Transition:

Quote:

Transition:

Conclusion:
