

# Get Writing

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## Session 3

7th Oct

**Mike Howarth**

# Homework?

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- [Acrobat.com](https://www.adobe.com/acrobat/online) anybody can access and share files
- Booklist available now
- Notebook notes during the week? Come prepared to tell a story of an event during the week?
  - The Mighty book of Boosh. Ed Read's Week
- Write for 1 hour
- Then for half hour rewrite using last week's writing skills notes?

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# Writer's Toolkit: more basics

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- ◆ Cut out all useless “weasel” words
- ◆ Short sentences.
- ◆ One idea per sentence.
- ◆ Treat each paragraph like a complete story.
- ◆ Be more explicit don't let the reader have to guess too much.
- ◆ Create a different version as a professional technique.
  
- ◆ Change order of sentences and phrases as a matter of course and professional ‘play around’.
  
- ◆ Use two sentences to develop an idea to avoid shocking reader and leave them hanging.
  
- ◆ Double line spacing, magnification, frequent saves, title date and page numbers, meaningful filenames, keep a sequence to track development.

# Starting a story

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## Patricia Cornwell:

Win Garano sets two lattes on a picnic table in front of the John F. Kennedy School of Government. It's a sunny afternoon, mid-May, and Harvard Square is crowded. He straddles a bench, overdressed and sweaty in a black Armani suit and black patent-leather Prada shoes, pretty sure the original owner of them is dead.

# story opening con't

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He got a feeling about it when the saleslady in the Hand-Me-Ups shop said he could have the “gently worn” outfit for ninety-nine dollars. Next she pulled out suits, shoes, belts, ties, even socks. DKNY, Hugo Boss, Gucci, Hermès, Ralph Lauren. All from the same celebrity whose name I can't tell you, and it occurred to Win that not so long ago, a wide receiver for the Patriots got killed in a car wreck. One eighty, six feet tall, muscular but not a moose. In other words, about Win's size.

# story opening 3

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He sits alone at the picnic table, more self-conscious by the moment. Students, faculty, the elite — most of them in jeans, shorts, carrying knapsacks — cluster at other tables, deep in conversations that include very few comments about the dull lecture District Attorney Monique Lamont just gave at the Forum. No Neighbour Left Behind. Win warned her it was a confusing title, not to mention a banal topic for such a prestigious political venue. She's not going to appreciate that he was right. He doesn't appreciate that she ordered him here on his day off so she could boss him around, belittle him. Make a note of this. Make a note of that. Call so and so. Get her a coffee. Starbucks.

# What we learnt about the Cornwell story development.

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- Sharp opening
- Extra background to grip
- Return to scene

I believe she is using a typical hard hitting “What system” News Story structure. A sharp start for instant impact.....



# The **WHAT** system (as taught to journalists)

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- **What** is the Story? The Intro must tell what is happening. It must be complete, concise and correct. It should say Who dis What, Where, When and How. If this is done well, the first area is self-contained and can be used on the front page as a taster; or for a Stop Press Column

# The W-H-A-T system

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- **How** did it happen. What happens next?  
Explain the story and give it the most important background information

# The W-H-A-T system

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- **Amplification.** Tell the story again by amplifying the points made in the intro. Take them one by one, in order of importance.

# The W-H-A-T system

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- **Tie Up** loose ends. Give additional or extra background information. + Climax

# The W-H-A-T system

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WHAT is the Story? The Intro must tell the story in a nutshell.

How did it happen.

The explanation.

AMPLIFY each

Intro point  
in order.

TIE up

all the

loose

ends.

# Writing activity in class

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- Can you apply from these lessons to your writing?

# For next week

- A map out your story- literally!!!.
- Do a sketch



# For next week

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## **Session 2 Homework**

### **Why not try one of these ideas?**

- 1) Write a blurb or review of a book you might want to write.
- 2) Make notes on how the book idea might develop: chapter headings, character-anything that comes to mind.