

Writing Tips by Bro. Naba'a Muhammad

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Points on writing a good perspective/commentary

1. Absolutely no Plagiarizing
2. Find reputable sources when writing your article; remember all sources are not created equally. Sources like The Huffington post, Washington Post etc. reputable sources only.
3. The Best source is the opposing teams view/source. For example if I'm writing a piece on Planned Parenthood, I will use their website to gather information's that proves my case. I.E. they have statistics on the abortion rates within the black community.
4. As members of the NOI, and writing for the FCN, it is given that we represent The Hon. Min. Louis Farrakhan, saying that to say that you don't always have to insert something verbatim he has written or spoken, esp. if it does not flow with the article.

The Basics of Writing

1. Remember the 5 W's. Who, What, When, Where, Why and How. These are the fundamental questions you are to ask yourself when researching and writing your topic.
2. Remember, you are either telling a story or making an argument.
3. Keep your stories flowing; there should be something that unfolds as you (reader) read the article.
4. Be clear early what your main point is. I.E. Are you trying to teach me something, challenge me to understand something, or want me to take action on something?
5. Ask yourself these questions...How does it work? How do I get started? Why does it work? Why is it valuable? When and where does it start? It's not always about the geographical location
6. It's your commentary, so have a position, it's "your view" of an argument or analysis. Ask yourself this question "What do I want people to get out of this piece?"
7. In structuring your piece, ask yourself, "Do I appeal to intellect, emotional pride; am I using numbers, anecdotes or examples?"
8. Write as if you are talking to someone with an 8th grade education. Your job as a writer is to make the info accessible.
9. Language: do not make it overly complicated, but do make it very précises. Ex. If you are choosing between using these 3 words Claim, Say, Charge, remember they have similar meanings yet a different undertone. Think about the order of your words, how they connect, how they sound. Ex. Marching, drumming, lock step, the plunging waters, the eclectic sound..... Try to avoid clichés, think about your audience and what they already know. Use powerful language!
10. In choosing a topic, you need to know something about the opposition's argument.

11. Are you going for a really strong or hard sell (This is my position, here are the facts) or a Soft sell (let me ask you the reader to think about this, or what I'm saying)
12. Don't be afraid to take a position: what you stand for should be very clear.
13. Throughout the article ask yourself, what is it that I need to repeat in order to drive it home.
14. Remember who your audience is, who are you writing to? Black folks, women, men, etc. and what do they already know of the subject. Ex. Most women already know that the onset of puberty starts around 12 or 13.
15. And then re-read, the article, how do the pieces fit together for the whole. Take a break, then re-read it before sending it off, no grammatical or spelling errors.

FCN is a very serious publication, we still have the freedom to inform, teach and express ourselves in numerous ways, through humor or our backgrounds and experiences.

Article should be between 600-800 words.