

MORE BROADCAST NEWS WRITING



INTRODUCTIONS TO SOUND BITES (SOTS): Thanks to the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

Introductions To Soundbites And Soundbites Should Not Be Redundant:

[WRONG]

- PACKERS HEAD COACH MIKE McCARTHY SAYS IT WAS A BIG WIN.
- SOT (McCarthy)--“It was a big win. We needed this to get back on track because it’s hard in this league to come back after losing two in a row.”

[BETTER]

- PACKERS HEAD COACH MIKE McCARTHY SAYS THIS GAME WAS IMPORTANT.
- SOT (McCarthy)--“It was a big win. We needed this to get back on track because it’s hard in this league to come back after losing two in a row.”

[NEVER!!!]

- PACKERS HEAD COACH MIKE McCARTHY ~~HAD THIS TO SAY.~~
- SOTF (McCarthy)--“It was a big win. We needed this to get back on track because it’s hard in this league to come back after losing two in a row.”

RTV 320 – RADIO STORY WITH SOUND BITE EXAMPLE

THE TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION IS BEGINNING AN EXPERIMENT INTO VARIABLE SPEED LIMITS ON EXPRESSWAYS.

TEX-DOT'S LAURA LOPEZ SAYS THE TRAFFIC MESSAGE SIGNS ALONG THE ROAD WILL SET LOWER SPEED LIMITS AHEAD OF WHERE TRAFFIC IS HEAVY ... OR THERE'S A WRECK ON THE ROAD:

[CLIP] :09 ... OUTCUE: APPROACHING CONGESTION



LOPEZ SAYS THE IDEA IS TO REDUCE REAR END COLLISIONS WHEN MOTORISTS COME UPON CONGESTION UNEXPECTEDLY... AND TO STOP DRIVERS FROM TAILGATING.

TV VO-SOT format

ANCHOR (JIM) ON-CAM	(JIM)
BOX: PLANE CRASH	INDIAN FOLKLORE CREDITS MOUNT DIABLO IN WESTERN NEVADA WITH MYSTICAL POWERS ... AND THIS WEEK AVIATORS ARE TAKING NOTE.
TAKE VO	
SHOT 1 – WIDE SHOT OF MOUNTAINS CG: MT. DIABLO “NEVADA TRIANGLE”	SINCE LAST WEEKEND, THREE PLANES HAVE CRASHED ON THE MOUNTAIN’S WESTERN SLOPE ... EARNING IT A NEW NICKNAME, “NEVADA TRIANGLE.”
SHOT 2 - MED SHOT, MOUNTAINS	OTHER PILOTS HAVE REPORTED CLOSE CALLS WITH THE PEAK, AMONG THEM LAS VEGAS CHARTER PILOT TED FERRELL.
SHOT 3 – PILOT BEING INTERVIEWED	HE SAYS HE’S NOT SUPERSTITIOUS, BUT HE’S ALSO NOT A FOOL:
TAKE SOT	(SOT)
RUNS :10	INCUE: “I’VE BEEN FLYING FOR 22 YEARS ...”
OUTCUE: “FLY AROUND”	OUTCUE: “I’D RATHER FLY AROUND.”
CG: TED FERRELL, LAS VEGAS PILOT	
VO RESUMES	(JIM)
SHOT 5 – PILOT IN COCKPIT, FLYING	FERRELL SAYS, IF ANYTHING, HE EXPECTS THE LEGEND SURROUNDING MOUNT DIABLO TO GROW BIGGER AND MORE OMINOUS WITH TIME.
SHOT 6- WIDE SHOT OF MOUNTAINS	BUT FERRELL SAYS IT’S A REPUTATION FOR MYSTIC POWER OF LITTLE REAL SUBSTANCE.

Attribution (thanks to Patrick Harwood, College of Charleston)

Attribution—Broadcast puts attribution at beginning of sentences for better flow

- Newspaper: James lost control of his motorcycle, crossed over the center line and collided with the oncoming pickup truck, Commerce Police Department Public

Information Officer David M. Cohen reported. ***(note attribution is at the end)***

- Broadcast: Commerce police spokesman David Cohen says Sennett lost control of his motorcycle, crossed the center line and collided with the oncoming pickup truck.

(note attribution is at beginning, long job title is shortened, and middle initial not used)

(Attribution, continued) (thanks to Patrick Harwood, College of Charleston)

Attribution—Use when a statement is opinionated, questionable, controversial, and when it would better establish the credibility of the statement. Attribution is not necessary to use when the statement is a known and indisputable fact.

Examples of when attribution not needed:

- The Texas State Legislature meets every two years.
- Texas A&M University-Commerce is a member of the Lone Star Conference.
- World War II ended in 1945.

Example of when attribution is needed:

- Most college students party too much.
- The oil companies are ripping off the public.
- Pilot error caused the plane crash.

(Thanks to GrassrootsDC.org)

Long, newspaper-style sentences should be broken up into smaller sentences:

- "For the fifth night in a row, denizens of the tunnels underneath Penn Station, the "Mole People", are worrying that the police might barge in and evict them for trespassing on City property."
- ...is not a bad sentence, but it's a mouthful to read and understand. It should be broken up into smaller ones:
- "The so-called "Mole People" under Penn Station are worried. They say the police want to evict them from the tunnels where they live. Technically they're trespassing on city property."

Sentences should be written in the positive, as opposed to the negative sense, as often as possible. Avoid using "not", "no", "don't", "doesn't", "won't", etc.

- "The union leadership doesn't accept that version of the story."
- ...can be rewritten in the positive:
- "The union leadership says the story is a lie."
- "Union leaders refuse to accept that version of the story."

(Thanks to Long Beach City College)

Write affirmative sentences because they are usually clearer than negative sentences. With negative sentences, your readers have to comprehend the important words in the sentence and then negate them. Sentences with more than one negative are even harder to understand. Look for negatives like *not* or *no* and for contractions with *n't* (such as *didn't*).

Examples:

- Negative: He did not fail the exam.
- Affirmative: He passed the exam.
- Negative: The committee did not consider the facts.
- Affirmative: The committee ignored the facts.