

# FICTIONAL

## J202

Culver

Assignment: Identifying Writing Problems

Week 2

### TA KEY

**Our Goal:** Learn to identify and repair common problems in media writing

**Your Task:** Review each of the following pieces of poor media writing, identify the problem and rewrite the passage to fix the trouble.

#### Specifics:

- split into your assigned small groups
- review each of the passages below and identify problems with the writing
- rewrite the passage to fix the problems
- reconvene as a large group to discuss the issues and come to consensus on improved writing for each passage

#### Wordiness

1. Date rape on campus affects students of all ages and classes.
2. Three-quarters of both men and women responding to a campus survey said date rape is an important issue facing the college community.
3. Awareness is the only way to combat a culture that hides date rape, so we plan to fight the university administration's choice to block distribution of our literature on Bascom Hill.

#### Redundancy

1. We recognize our gun-control campaign must be sensitive to victims.
2. We expect the campaign to have an impressive effect.
3. Police have tried to use publicity to convince people to lock their handguns because of burglary.

#### Passive Voice

1. Most experts cite three signs of domestic violence: physical trauma, emotional withdrawal and social retreat.
2. She said women's groups all over the country can help domestic violence victims.
3. Helen, an abuse victim, found the day difficult because it was her anniversary.

### **Unnecessary Words**

1. Heston said banning handguns threatens our constitutional rights.
2. The legislator proposed a new bill to improve police access to gun licenses.
3. The issue was controversial, and the floor debate grew heated. Representative Molly Mars called her colleague's views on waiting periods misguided. She said waiting periods should be capped as they stand now.

### **Stilted Writing**

1. The victim was stabbed in his left side. (refer to the tip on pg 71 of WWW for note on why crime stories often require passive voice – if we knew who stabbed the victim, would could make it active)
2. Police said an inattentive driver caused the crash.
3. Violence plays an important role in American culture.

### **Clichés**

1. Not long ago, we took violence in movies for granted. Studios served ever-increasing heaps of violence, and audiences willingly delivered their ticket dollars to gobble servings of guns and gore.
2. Most action movie characters are charged up and well-armed.
3. Valenti withdrew his proposal quickly when it became clear the studios opposed a new ratings system.

### **Jargon**

1. Most arsonists set blazes late at night in the back of buildings.
2. Police believe the arsonist used a gasoline can with a long fuse inserted through the nozzle. He lit the fuse and ran from the building before it erupted in flames.
3. Although some arsonists are youths pulling pranks, most are in the business of arson. Often white males between the ages of 18 and 36, contract arsonists are usually hired by building owners to commit insurance fraud.

### **Inconsistent Tense**

1. Researcher Karen Kermit said violence on television clearly has impact, but studies have failed to define exactly what that impact is. "We have indications of many effects but few clear patterns," she said.
2. The 1950s marked the beginning of violence on television, as variety shows began to give way to dramas. The rise of the TV western in the '60s solidified the use of violence for dramatic effect.
3. Violence on television doesn't exist in a vacuum. It is surrounded by morality tales of characters thinking good thoughts, furthering good causes and building good communities.

### **Unclear**

1. Seeing students in a school setting gives insight into how violence erupts. Kids who face bullying, name-calling and exclusion often grow unnerved.
2. We have seen a decrease in violence since we introduced new security measures at the beginning of the school year.
3. Linda called the school nurse and asked for Mary's mother after Mary said she was hurt.

### **Weak Verb**

1. Witness said before the shooting, the suspect walked down the street, clutching a shotgun.
2. Police considered issuing an "Amber Alert" when they thought the suspect had taken his daughter from her school playground before the shootings. They later learned the little girl was hiding in a classroom.
3. District Attorney Rod Randall said he will charge suspect Bill Pappas with first-degree intentional homicide later today.