Welcome to the 7th issue of PJP’s "The Mighty Pen," an educational newsletter with writing and reporting tips. **NOTE:** PJP offices will be closed from 12/24/22 to 1/9/23.

**JOURNALISM BASICS**

We publish stories on our website and in our print newspaper, PJP x Inside. Submission information is in PJPxInside. Upon request, PJP can add you to our mailing list and can send you an upcoming media writing handbook, detailed writing prompts and other resources. Individuals can also ask to be connected with PJP electronically to directly receive The Mighty Pen. We accept essays, articles and illustrated pieces by postal mail or email. Accepted stories go through five rounds of editing. The whole process takes 12 to 16 weeks. We send each writer a copy of the final product.

**REPORTING TIPS: BE TRANSPARENT**

Journalists must always be transparent with their readers about where they got their information from, and what in their story is fact and what is opinion. If you didn't get the information through direct observation or experience, you received it second-hand — tell your readers where it came from. Did you read it somewhere? Did someone tell you about it? Identify your sources clearly and quickly. Don't let your reader wonder, "How do they know this?"

Additionally, give your reader some information about how reliable a source is and why you spoke to them. When you write, "The domestication of dogs began about 20,000 years ago in multiple parts of the globe, according to Jane Smith, a University of Vermont associate professor who researches the dog genome," the words that follow "according to" accomplish two goals: 1) they identify the source of the information, and 2) they explain why we should listen to Smith on this topic: because she's a researcher who specializes in the genetic makeup of the dog.

**TRY THIS!**

If you have access to a news article, such as in a newspaper, look for phrases that inform the reader about the writer's reporting process. For example, "Smith declined to be interviewed for this story" tells you that the journalist did try to get Smith's point of view. Another example: "Our publication was unable to confirm the Ukrainian president's assertions" tells you to take the information with a grain of salt.
WRITING TIPS: AP STYLE

Every news organization has a diverse community of writers with a wide variety of writing styles. But a newspaper, magazine or news website must present a coherent and consistent voice to its readers. Otherwise, the publication could seem messy, and readers could get confused by the different conventions. (Example: “6AM” vs. “six a.m.” vs. “6 am”).

To eliminate confusion, publications adopt a preferred style. They maintain a stylebook with rules about spelling, punctuation, grammar and word choice that their writers are expected to follow.

Most publications rely on a stylebook created by a news organization called the Associated Press. From the journalist’s perspective, this means that most editors will be happy to receive a story written in the AP style. See if your facility would be willing to acquire a copy of the AP Stylebook for their library.

ASK RAZ!

Mr. Kevin and Mr. Davon both ask what makes for a good story. Here is one way to answer this: whatever will make an editor publish your story and whatever will make others read it. Good stories usually have people in them who are doing something that readers are curious about, and experience feelings that readers identify with. A good article truthfully tells both the micro story (what happened to one or more people) and the macro story (what universal lessons we can take from it).

What do you wanna know about journalism? Send a JPay message to PJP, Attn: Coach Raz, and we'll try to answer it in The Mighty Pen.

If you know other writers who would like to receive this newsletter, send us their name and prison ID.

Best,
Raz & PJP Editors