cSw Story Focus & Formats

Is your research done? Have you interviewed a Science Star? Do you understand the science? Then it's time to write! (You may have to double back to sources for clarification, but you're ready to start your first draft.)

You need to choose a hook (angle/theme) to focus your story. It can be about:

- **The scientist** (a look at how/why he or she is involved in the research; brings the science to life through the eyes/passion of the scientist)
- **The science** (or a particularly interesting/engaging piece of it)
- **A combination** (usually heavier on the science, but weaves in some interesting background or personality of the scientist)

You also need to choose one of the following formats for your story:

1. **NEWS** - Inverted pyramid of journalism
   
   Straight-forward fact-based.
   Factual headline with key words.
   Can include effective quotes.
   The tone/voice is serious and objective.
   Always written in third person.

2. **BLOG** - Short feature style
   
   Creative, more friendly.
   Creative headline with key words.
   Can include effective quotes.
   The tone/voice reflects the writer’s style.
   Can be written in first person.
3. **Q&A - Interview style**

   Question and answer format.
   Straight or creative headline with key words.
   Requires well-crafted introduction;
   clear, engaging questions; and well-edited
   responses that are placed in the most
   effective order.
   The intro & questions reflect the writer’s
   voice, while the answers let us “hear” the
   scientist.

   No matter which FOCUS or FORMAT you choose, your story must:

   - be 700 words or less
   - include key (searchable) words in the headline
   - start with 2-3 engaging “In Brief” summary points
   - have a Works Cited list

   Don’t forget to share your process and drafts with your Comms Mentor! They are here to help you!