



Guidance and Details for Curious Science Writer Mentors

Curious Science Writers (cSw) aims to provide students with real-world science communication experience. Unlike school assignments, students here won't work for grades but will gain insight into the professional world of science writing.

As a mentor, your role aligns with Merriam-Webster's definition of a mentor: *"a trusted counselor or guide."* You have expertise in communicating life sciences and a passion for guiding motivated students who may be new to working alongside adults in a professional setting.

Mentorship Responsibilities

For Writers:

- Guide students on requesting and conducting interviews with scientists.
- Provide feedback on early drafts, ensuring structure and scientific accuracy.
- Challenge students to refine their writing by improving word choice, metaphors, and clarity.

For Editors, Graphic Designers & Social Media Coordinators:

- Offer insights to help students develop their skills in their respective roles.
- Encourage best practices for engaging public audiences and making science accessible.

We primarily seek mentors for writers but also welcome mentors for other roles (editors, graphic designers, social media coordinators). The following timeline focuses on writer mentorship, while other roles will be addressed individually. Questions? info@curioussciencewriters.org

Mentor Timeline & Time Commitment

July 1 - July 14: Familiarization

- Review your mentee's topic, preliminary sources, and potential content experts.

Week of July 13: Boot Camp

- Be available to answer mentee questions and review their email drafts to content experts.
- Schedule an initial phone/video call with your mentee (to occur after Boot Camp).
- (Optional) Join Boot Camp virtually to introduce yourself and share career insights.

Week of July 20: First Mentor-Mentee Meeting

- Discuss the mentee's topic, sources, and content expert interview plans.
- Note: Mentee should have an interview scheduled no later than August 1

July 27 - August 30: Writing & Review Process

- Schedule a second meeting **after** the mentee interview interviews a content expert to refine the story angle.
- Provide ongoing guidance, feedback, and encouragement during the writing process.
- (Optional) Attend the **Curious Science Writers Lock-In** in September.
- (Optional) Stay engaged with the mentee's progress during the academic year.
- (Optional) Participate in the Mentor's Meeting (held in the spring)

Program Details & Timeline

Before Boot Camp:

cSw organizers will provide mentors with:

- Mentee's name, grade level, and contact information.
- Mentee's selected biomedical topic and preliminary research.
- A detailed Boot Camp curriculum covering storytelling and science communication skills.

During Boot Camp (July 13 - July 17):

- Mentees will introduce themselves via email on July 13. Please respond with your introduction. If you do not receive an email, feel free to reach out AFTER July 13.
- Mentees will provide a summary of their topic and initial sources.
- Be available to offer guidance on source selection, content experts, and interview requests.
- (Optional) Pop into our virtual boot camp session and share a brief bio with tips for science communication.
- (Optional) Attend the in-person research facility visit in your area (if available)

Post Boot Camp (July - August):

- Confirm preferred communication methods (email, phone, video calls). Initial meetings should be via phone/video.
 - Encourage mentees to set deadlines for interviews, drafts, and status updates.
 - Help mentees refine their interview questions and confirm content expert outreach.
Content expert interviews should be completed by August 1. Encourage students to pick alternative experts if their first choices are not responding.
 - Guide mentees through brainstorming creative story angles after their interview.
 - Collaborate on draft revisions, ensuring scientific accuracy and engaging storytelling.
 - The final draft must be mentor-approved before submission to the cSw Editorial Team via an online form.
 - The student's assigned Team Editor will begin the editing process.
 - The final draft will be sent to the content expert by the writer for a fact check.
 - Finalized stories, with student-created illustrations, will be published on the **cSw blog** (www.curioussciencewriters.org) and shared on social media.
-

Mentor Guidelines & Best Practice

- **Cc info@curioussciencewriters.org on all communications** for transparency and progress tracking.
 - Encourage students to communicate with you at critical points (post-interview, outlining, drafting, revising).
 - Serve as a guide and encourager, helping students develop independent writing and research skills.
 - Suggest additional sources and perspectives that may enhance the story.
 - Share your professional insights and best practices for science communication.
 - If your mentee is unresponsive or struggling, please reach out to info@curioussciencewriters.org or paula@amprogress.org for support.
-

Thank you for your willingness to inspire and guide future science communicators!