

Steps in the Writing Process

- 1 As you begin to develop the script, decide on the major theme on which you want to focus. What is each interview subject's story? What do you want the audience to say after viewing each subject's story? After viewing your whole documentary or your portion of the class documentary?
- 2 Write a lead, or an introduction, for the whole documentary or your portion of the class documentary. A lead is a journalism term for the opening statement made in a story. It is meant to capture attention as well as capture the direction and mood of the story. The lead for the whole documentary should portray its purpose or mission.
- 3 What sound bites will you use to complement your lead/angle? Go through your transcription log and select potential sound bites by making notations on the log. Try to use at least one to two quotes from all interviewees. When you're done, make a list of the sound bites, with the exact quote and time so importing quotes into iMovie is more efficient. (For example: "Coming home: Jones—33:12-34:33 'I remember going to a bar for a drink as soon as I got off the plane. The first question the waitress asked me was how many babies I killed.' ")

As you review the interviews, keep notes on what reactions you're lacking and those that you feel will be necessary to get from another source, such as another interview.

- 4 Look at the background information you accumulated during your research and determine any additional research that needs to be done. Divide the research among yourselves or solicit help.
- 5 Construct an outline for the script. Develop a clear outline. Where do you want to start? What flows together logically and chronologically? Where and how do you want to end? Consider a motif to tie it all together. Consider a title for your segment.
- 6 Write a rough draft for your documentary, complete with transitions, quotes, and a conclusion. Write the script in a journalistic style—one that is conversational, capturing a cadence. This script should be complete with facts, reaction, and emotion. A typical setup for documentaries and news stories is news, news, reaction to that news, news, reaction, news, reaction, news, news, reaction, and so on.
- 7 Edit and reedit your script.
- 8 Hand in your rough draft.