

# Writing - Journalism Tips

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One skill that both reporters and scientists are supposed to have is the ability to collect evidence and assess its importance and value in a quest for whatever turns out to be the "truth."

*Jeff Hecht, New Scientist magazine*

## Essential Questions

Formulating a good question will make a big difference in the depth of your writing. It can help you make a strong point, develop a plan or course of action, or make a decision.

### **From Point A to B: Avoiding the Simple Question.**

Writing questions such as "What is cancer?" simply **asks you to move information from one point (the resource) to another (your paper).**

Instead of the above question, note how much more powerful the following is: "What plan could you develop that would reduce your likelihood of developing cancer?" However, the question can still be strengthened. At this point it is helpful to visualize what your answer might be to your question. In this case, you could answer this question by developing a list of strategies – You are still moving information.

A much better question is "Which two strategies are the most likely to reduce your likelihood of developing cancer?" In this case, the question requires you to discriminate among the potential list of strategies, and then defend your choice. **Rather than simply moving information from one source to your paper, you are actively thinking with that information!**

Essential Question Information modified from

[http://www.myprojectpages.com/support/ess\\_questpopup.htm](http://www.myprojectpages.com/support/ess_questpopup.htm)

## Potential Resources

Young People's Press

Guide to Opinion Writing

[http://www.ypp.net/wg\\_opinionpiece.asp](http://www.ypp.net/wg_opinionpiece.asp)

Guide to News Writing (focus on Soft News)

Also includes interviewing tips

[http://www.ypp.net/wg\\_newsarticle.asp](http://www.ypp.net/wg_newsarticle.asp)

## Sample Stories

New Scientist

<http://www.newscientist.com/home.ns>

Science News Online

<http://www.sciencenews.org/>

Science Friday: NPR

<http://www.sciencefriday.com/>

Gareth Cook – Boston Globe Pulitzer Prize for Stem Cell Stories

<http://www.pulitzer.org/year/2005/explanatory-reporting/>