

**Interviews/New Angle:** Now it's time to go out and actually start your interviews. Remember all the tips you have learned. Try to conduct your interview like a conversation with your best friend.

**Lead:** While your interviews are still fresh in your mind, write your lead, not just the first paragraph, but your opening sequence, likely to be your first three to five paragraphs. Remember, you are always working the story in your mind's eye.

**Organization:** Before proceeding, set up some kind of an organizational process. Organize your notes from various interviews. If you used a tape recorder (and you should) transcribe your notes (type all your notes). Organize them by subtopics. Create an inverted pyramid or an outline, whatever you have to do in order to add some logical organization to your story.

**More interviews and/or observation:** Yes, it's OK to call an interviewee back and ask more questions, clarify answers, check facts. Perhaps during the interview a subject described a scene to you. Try to see that scene for yourself if at all possible.

**Write the story:** It's time to put all the pieces together. Refer to handouts, books and advice about good writing techniques. Work hard, however, to avoid the repetitive form of quote-transition. Use many of the techniques you have been taught in the past and developed on your own.

**Edit the story:** You think you're finished, but really you're not. Take time to edit your story after the writing jets have cooled. Have someone

## AVOIDING THE "VERY" TRAP

It's very easy to fall into the "very" trap while composing copy. Use this simple exercise to boost your vocabulary. Can you brainstorm six single descriptive words to replace the following "very" statements?

1. Very far
2. Very near
3. Very large
4. Very small
5. Very hot
6. Very cold
7. Very weak
8. Very strong
9. Very quiet
10. Very loud

Find some answers at the bottom of the page!

## PROPER USE OF DASHES

### EM DASH

Used to denote an abrupt change in thought in a sentence or an emphatic pause. Always has a space on both sides, except when used at the beginning of a paragraph.

**e.g.** "I'm going to Hawaii — if I get a raise."

**e.g.** "Charles had a birthday — his 40th — on May 12."

Used when a phrase that otherwise would be set off by commas contains a series that must be separated by commas. Always has a space on both sides, except when used at the beginning of a paragraph.

**e.g.** "We have everything we need — hamburgers, buns, chips, cheese, soft drinks — for tonight's cookout."

### EN DASH

Used in place of the word "to" or "through," or to connect two nouns of equal importance. No spaces on either side.

**e.g.** "Please refer to pages 37–45 in your textbook."

**e.g.** "The New York–Chicago flight has been delayed."

Possible Answers: 1. Distant, Remote, Removed, Isolated, Outlying, Faraway 2. Close, Nigh, Adjacent, Proximate, Neighboring, Imminent 3. Enormous, Immense, Huge, Vast, Grand, Voluminous 4. Tiny, Fine, Minute, Puny, Little, Petite 5. Torrid, Scorching, Fiery, Seltering, Sultry, Searing 6. Frigid, Freezing, Bitter, Icy, Arctic, Wintry 7. Frail, Feeble, Delicate, Languid, Sligh, Debilitated 8. Forceful, Mighty, Muscular, Powerful, Stalwart, Stout 9. Still, Calm, Serene, Tranquil, Quiescent, Hushed 10. Blaring, Clamorous, Resounding, Thunderous, Brazen, Voliferous