Creating a Story Plan for Reporting:

1. Focus Statement: A simple sentence of 20 words or fewer that captures what you expect to find. (As you report, the facts you find may cause this focus to shift to fit the emerging truth.)

2. Picture your average reader. Brainstorm a list of questions that need to be answered for that person to understand this story. Make sure that every question pertains to the focus you’ve set.

3. Now, look at those questions. Who can best answer them? Here you might have a specific name or you may only have a category such as “elementary school teacher” or “cop patrolling that area.”

4. Read over your notes. Mark what truly relates to the focus. If something goes down a different rabbit hole, lightly cross it out. You may want to come back to it for another story but it does not fit the focus of this one.

5. Look back at the list of questions. Are they answered? You may be finished sooner than you think.

Need help planning your story, organizing the information or polishing a draft?

Book appointments with peer writing coaches at:

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