1. **Show, don't tell:** Guide your audience through the visual elements of your audio story. Don’t be afraid to get creative with your descriptions of scenes and sources. When you’re telling an audio story, you can’t rely on visual cues like images or video to help your audience understand the story. Try expanding on a source’s physical appearance or the location where something happened. Bring the listener to the moment.

2. **Write with strong, active verbs, but be conversational at the same time:** This is sort of a contradiction because people don’t always speak this way. You don’t often say, “I walk across the street” – you say, “I’m walking across the street.” Look for moments where you can work in more active voice, but avoid making it sound overly stilted or formal. Which brings us to our next tip…

3. **…read it out loud.** Read your story the way it’s meant to be heard. This will help you to pick out awkward phrasing and overly long and complicated sentences. Try to write your stories so that they sound like you’re explaining a story to a friend. It’s OK to keep things a little more conversational.

4. **Look for scenes and weave in facts.** Nobody wants to listen to an audio story that’s basically a lecture. It helps when you can bring a listener to a particular moment or scene (by using that descriptive writing and active voice). If an explanation is overly technical, listeners will likely lose focus (because most people who listen to podcasts are multitasking). Try to use scenes to convey your facts instead of listing them in a huge chunk of narration.

5. **Pay close attention to length.** Audio story limits are based on run time, not word count, which can be difficult to gauge as a newcomer. This [words-to-minutes calculator](#) is super helpful. If you have an average speaking rate (130 words per minute), you can assume that about 1,300 words is about 10 minutes.

6. **Write in pauses, music and other cues.** The fun of audio storytelling is that you get to create a picture for the listener using music and natural sounds that you collected while reporting. If you’re talking about something and it has a sound, then we should probably hear that sound in the story. Add music to indicate tone and add texture to long segments of narration. Writing in where to pause and change your speaking tone will help you when you’re recording your narration.

7. **Use signposts throughout.** People have short attention spans! I bet you already forgot that I typed that above. With print stories or books, you can go back and reread whatever it is that you missed the first time if you’re confused or lose your place, but you can’t really do that with audio unless you feel like skipping back and ahead in time, which sounds terrible. So you’ll need to look for places in the script where you can remind people of a fact that’s important to the story or who a person is. The best place to do this is right before or after a person speaks. “Here’s so-and-so again,” etc.
8. **Play with tenses.** The cool thing about audio storytelling is that you can use past or present tense. Make sure whatever tense you’re using makes sense within the context.

9. **Get lots of feedback.** Read your script out loud over and over again – to your roommates, friends, the writing coaches – anyone! It’ll help you work out the kinks.

10. **Cut, cut, cut** People have short attention spans! That means if you’re bored by something, chances are your listeners will be bored, too. Don’t be afraid to kill something entirely and flesh out another piece of your script instead.