

## Aim Higher

### Coursework ideas

Attended a workshop and now not sure where to start? These hints might help you to get going. . .

#### General thoughts – before putting pen to paper

1. Always think about style/purpose/audience before you begin to plan.
  - What am I writing?
  - Who am I writing it for?
  - So what will the style need to be?
2. Decide on your planning format. Will it be a mind map or would something linear be more suited?
3. Then capture your ideas on your plan and organise them into paragraphs.
4. Think about how your opening will capture your reader's attention. You could use a question as a hook. Or maybe start with a controversial statement, which is bound to annoy or upset.
5. Finally – don't forget to link your ending with your beginning. Refer to your opening idea; use some of the same words; use a 'kick line' that emphasises the validity of what you have written e.g. a rhetorical question, an emotive statement, a personal direct request.

**The following are just ideas to get you started. You may already have your own – fine. Go ahead and write!**

#### Media Communications

Two leads here – you could write a press release or copy for the Saints website.

1. Press release. This should be:
  - Concise - keep it punchy and don't use unnecessary flowery language e.g. cutting-edge, revolutionary.
  - Factual – present information that is true, correct and doesn't embellish anything
  - Objective - virtually impossible to do, but refrain from using over hyped quotations from sources, as they will be presented as being too biased.
  - Correct - ensure that the release is grammatically correct and doesn't contain any spelling mistakes, errors, and that sources are quoted correctly.

2. Website copy

Studies show that people reading web pages approach this differently from other texts. They expect to see short sentences, bullet points, **bolded text** that highlights what the web page is about. They are not expecting to read flowery prose, but they do want entertaining. So this is what you do:

- Use imperative verbs to command your reader to do something e.g. 'dig deeper into this section', 'Find out more by . . .', 'Don't miss out on the chance to . . .'
- Use personal pronouns – you, yours
- Use the present tense and interesting verbs. These add powerful association to your topic.
- Select a few details and use them suggestively. For example, you can imply that you might miss a match if you don't invest in a season ticket 'Why miss a match? Buy a season ticket and be guaranteed a seat.'

- Use headlines that state a benefit and then substantiate them by putting the reader in the copy e.g. *The stunning St Mary's stadium makes a perfect venue to entertain clients, friends or family on matchdays. Whether you're rewarding staff for contributing to the success of your company or looking to give someone a birthday celebration to remember, enjoy the game in comfort and style with a hospitality package that suits your needs and budget.*

## Broadcasting

### You could write:

1. An interview with any number of people e.g. players, club chairman, manager, drug testers. Think about the style of your interview. Will it be:

- A straightforward **account** of the interview
- A **first person account** written as if you were the person you interviewed.
- A **magazine style interview** (have a look at some examples)
- An **edited transcript** of a recorded interview. Concentrate on the more interesting sections. Not everything said has to be used.
- A **detailed commentary** on a photo or photos
- A **blog**.
- Think carefully about questions. These need to be open questions, rather than questions that invite one-word answers.
- 'What would you do if' questions are always entertaining.

2. A commentary on match highlights.

- Read or listen to other commentaries to get a feel for the style and tone
- Write about emotions and what matters (hint: it's not the score)
- Find a theme that will hold up regardless of the outcome. Using a metaphor that can run through your commentary and that you can keep returning too holds interest.
- A key skill is to imagine and describe what is in front of you. If you think of yourself as eyes of the listener, you won't run out of words during the game.
- Avoid using the same word. This can be a problem in football as there are only so many different moves. You don't want your commentary to be "pass, pass, shot at goal, save, pass, pass." Write down a list of different ways of describing the moves and cross them off as you use them, to avoid repetition e.g. for pass you could say nudge, flick, glance, shot, skim, float, glide, curl, smash, thunder, thump.

## Marketing

Firstly – make sure that you understand the difference between **marketing/promotion** and **advertising**. Promotion is PR and isn't paid for; advertising is 'paid for' inserts.

### You could write marketing copy for the venue or an event. Here are some tips:

- Write a **creative brief**. You can include this as part of your coursework. Before you start to think about what the promotional piece you are working on should be like, make sure you understand exactly what the purpose of the communication is and what you want to achieve by it.
- Remember your audience and make sure the language used is appropriate for that group.
- Less is more. Try not to say too much. You need to capture attention rather than give all the details.
- Ensure that any images used are meaningful. You may understand what the image represents but will your audience?
- Keep copy simple. Using too many acronyms or specific phrases may confuse an external audience. When in doubt, it is better to assume that the audience has no knowledge than to risk confusing them.

- Think about the importance of headlines. Remember that the headline may be the only part that your audience will read. Make sure that your headline will create interest to encourage the reader to read more.
- Be factual but not precise. Marketing copy, while it mustn't be misleading, should present the venue/event in the best possible light. Make sure that you don't include any negative messages in your communication.