Writing for broadcast

...TV, it’s visual thing...

Differences between writing for the ear and for the eye:
- Broadcast is telling -- not chronicling -- what happened.
- The style should be conversational; informal but not cozy.
- The fewer figures the better.

Each sentence should contain only one idea or image.
- Sentences should be brief.
- Present tense if possible.

Script format
- Single column (radio)
- Two column -- primary TV format, with video on the left and audio on the right.
- Film or screenplay format -- with each sequence consecutively numbered.

Basic format
- Typed.
- Double or triple spaced.
- Upper/lower case.

Basic format
- Don’t use copyediting symbols. Cross out the entire word(s) and write corrected word(s) above it/Them.
- Avoid saying “quote” and “unquote”. Paraphrase.
Punctuation

- Don’t use semicolons.
- Do use ellipses and dashes for longer pauses than commas.
- Use underlines for emphasis.

Treatment

- The treatment or scenario is a more detailed chronological rundown of the prospective script, giving information about the plot, setting and characters, and examples of the dialogue.

Storyboarding

- Rough sketch of the anticipated shot. Emphasis on rough.
- Give commentary at the bottom.
- What this does is gets you to visualize what your show will look like.

Scriptwriting

- Decide what type of approach your video will need.
- Consider your audience.
- Write the way you speak.
- Full column of video (one side of page) will last 30-45 seconds/page.
- Use on-screen text.

Words

- Never split words or hyphenated phrases from one line to the next.
- Eliminate most abbreviations.
  - Write out days, months, states, military titles.
  - Can abbreviate Mr., Mrs., Dr.
  - Common ones need punctuation.
    - U-N, I-O-U, F-B-I

Numbers

- Spell out figures through ELEVEN. Use numerals for 12-999. Use hyphenated combinations for numerals and words above 999.
  - Example: 33-thousand.
- Round off numbers.
Numbers
- Use “st,” “nd,” “th,” and “rd” after dates, addresses and numbers to be read as ordinary numbers. (Example: “2nd Street,” “May 14th”)

Titles and names
- Titles precede names.
- Use complete name in the first reference, then last name OR first name thereafter.
- Omit obscure names and places if they are not meaningful to the story.

Titles and names
- Use phonetic spellings for difficult pronunciations.
- In age reference, precede the name with the age. (Example: The victim, 21-year-old Rob Roy.)

Titles and names
- Don’t begin a story with a person’s name unless the person is famous.
- Use a “qualifier” to introduce the person.
- Include the name later.

Quotations
- Use direct quotes SPARINGLY. ((Let people say their own words.))
- If you must use a direct quote, set it off with such phrases as:
  - “In the words of…”
  - "As he put it…"
  - Or try to paraphrase as much as possible.

Writing hints
- Keep sentences short.
- Prefer the simple to the complex.
  - Example: use words like buy, instead of purchase. City, not metropolis.
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<th>Writing hints</th>
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<td>Put action in your verbs.</td>
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<td>- &quot;The fullback hits the line.&quot; NOT &quot;The line is hit by the fullback.&quot;</td>
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<td>Write like you talk.</td>
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<td>- Ask yourself: &quot;How would I say that? What would I tell the person if he were on the other end of a long-distance phone call?&quot;</td>
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<td>Don’t use technical jargon.</td>
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<td>Write with emphasis on picture.</td>
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<td>(We are creating a video program, not an audio program.)</td>
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<td>Don’t get “wordy.”</td>
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<td>- Let the visuals carry the message.</td>
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<td>Use plenty of pauses or music bridges.</td>
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<td>READ THE COPY ALOUD.</td>
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