

Medical Writing Doesn't Have to Be Complicated.



In light of the fires ravaging the Amazon, I wanted to share some information about environmental and natural disasters I learned from the rural journalism I attended earlier this summer. I'm also including some pointers I picked up on storytelling with humor from a different event.

Hurricanes and Floods Aren't the Only Disasters that Devastate the Environment



In the June edition of my newsletter, I discussed some of the issues facing rural communities as presented at the [Association of Health Care Journalists Rural Health Journalism Workshop](#). However, since I didn't mention that the workshop also covered the impact of natural disasters on diverse populations across the globe, here are four critical points on that front:

- 1) Experts say that two-thirds of the planet's global warming has occurred since 1975.
- 2) Floods and, until recently, *natural* wildfires, dominate media headlines, but sand and dust storms also compromise environmental, human, and animal health. Areas with low vegetation such as the Sonoran Desert of Arizona and Mexico and the Persian Gulf are especially at risk.
- 3) Volcanoes famously release toxic gases and debris into the air. However, hot lava threatens aquatic life because it boils ocean water, producing acid rain and toxic vapors as byproducts—a phenomenon called laze.
- 4) More than 3 million U.S military members and contractors developed [deployment-related lung disease](#) as a result of their exposures to harmful substances during their service in Southeast Asia.

The Humor in the Situation: Using Comedy to Keep Audiences Engaged

Earlier this month, I attended a workshop on how to use humor to tell a story. With the average attention span steadily shrinking, I was fascinated by how fundamental elements of standup comedy can hook your audience and keep them entertained.

Like news writing, comics grab their audiences' attention immediately with their opening line. The difference is they use the element of surprise to keep their listeners engaged.

Comics use three basic components to tell a joke, which easily extrapolates to writing. These are:

1. **The Setup:** As its name indicates, the setup introduces your topic and prepares your audience to hear your point of view.
2. **The Punch:** This is almost like a turning point in the story that catches the audience off-guard because it is completely unexpected. Using the punch heightens the engagement.
3. **The Tag:** The climax of the joke, comedians often use the tag to eclipse the surprise element of the punch and heighten the humor of the situation.

So... What's Next?

I am excited that my first piece as a [Doximity Op-Med Fellow](#) runs soon. Current projects include pieces about medication safety in the geriatric population, authorized generics, and nanotechnology for various outlets. For my WebMD column this month, I discussed how pharmacists can help people with allergies and medical conditions choose personal care products such as [lotions and shampoos](#).

On the medical writing side, I've been doing more copywriting and editorial projects lately. With such a busy summer, I look forward to engaging in more conference coverage and other activities.

As always, I'll be sure to include a few pearls from these events.

Until then, stay tuned....



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