

As a writer, I've repeatedly aimed to localize state and national events by speaking to those in my community who are impacted by them. Through my attempts to do that, I've learned that my writing skills are simply the backdrop for my sources' experiences and opinions. Since I believe that good reporting is the basis of all good writing, I've learned to use my writing to connect the experiences of my sources and provide context with the ultimate goal of clearly conveying my sources' thoughts to the reader.

Identity (<http://elestoque.org/identity/>)

The original angle of this article was how people's idea of their own identity had changed based on the present-day political climate. Working with two other staff writers, we narrowed down the angle to examine the impact of the political climate on people from different communities. We interviewed eight sources of different ethnicities, genders and sexualities as well as a political science professor who studies minority integration. I wrote nearly the entirety of this 2,000 word story and since I was used to writing stories with three sources, working with nine different sources taught me how to let the sources drive the story, keeping transition paragraphs concise.

The significance of National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day

(<http://elestoque.org/72012/news/significance-national-pearl-harbor-remembrance-day/>)

I wrote this article about National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day, with the intent of localizing an event that most students only read about in history textbooks. The article's sources were a Japanese-american history teacher, a local resident who was born in an internment camp and a student whose family was impacted by the war. In this article, I utilized transition paragraphs as a way to provide context in the form of ages, years and other factual details.

Entangled ethics: the questions raised by DNA testing

(<http://elestoque.org/70079/opinion/entangled-ethics-questions-raised-dna-testing/>)

In this article about DNA testing and the ethical debate surrounding it, I used writing to outline the concept of DNA testing and the sources' concerns regarding it.

Finding a home: breeders versus shelters

(<http://elestoque.org/71263/opinion/finding-home-breeders-shelters/>)

In light of California's Assembly Bill 485 which made it illegal for pet stores to sell pets from sources other than rescue groups or shelters, I wrote this article about the debate between adopting from shelters versus breeders. I learned to use transition paragraphs to clearly state the sources' stances on the debate, which provided context for the quotes. The transition paragraphs also helped to explain the viewpoints of those opposing the bill entirely, since I had trouble finding anyone who was completely against the bill — most of my sources recognized both the pros and cons of the bill, but generally supported it.

A different direction (<https://elestoque.atavist.com/a-different-direction>)

I wrote nearly the entirety of this article about single-gender schools, using transition paragraphs to smoothly integrate the article's five sources. Since single-gender schools are something that our school's students are unfamiliar with, I also aimed to make it easy for the reader to understand the sources' viewpoints through paraphrasing.