Scriptwriting masterclass with Jim Taylor from Newsbeat: key points

Radio Reports

- The first job when writing a radio report, after reading up on the story and interviewing, is scripting the piece.
- The first part to write is the cue – what the presenter reads out when they introduce the report.
- The cue should sum up the story in a few sentences.
- The report needs to be clear, concise and correct.
- A good rule to remember is - if it’s a word that you wouldn’t say to your mate when you were telling them about the story, then don’t include it in your script.
- Read your script out loud to make sure it makes sense and if you can, get someone else to listen to it as well.
- It’s good to include interviews and vox pops by people who’ve been affected.
- Include the best clips and edit the untidy bits (the ums) but don’t leave sounding unnatural.
- Include relevant sound effects or music.

Online Reports

- You need a good headline.
- The first few lines should sum up the story and add details further down.
- Use pictures but make sure they’re relevant to the story.
- Keep videos short and snappy.
- Make sure the videos are the sort you’d be interested in sharing yourself.

TV Reports

- You don’t want to describe what’s happening on screen – let the pictures do the talking – give more information about it.
- You can use graphics. They’re good for statistics and figures.
- You could use short vox pops and interviews.
- Most TV pieces also include a piece to camera – where a reporter is on screen talking in a place relevant to the story.

Top Tips

- Check your scripts, then get someone else to check. Then check again.
- Make sure everything is accurate, true and balanced.
- If there are two sides to the story – tell them both.
- When you interview, make sure the person knows where their interview is going to appear and if they’re under 18 only use their first name.
  Watch the video again