

Note Taking/ Report Writing

Facilitator Guide

Session Overview

Introduction & Learning Objectives	05m
Lecture – Note Taking & Report Writing	45m
Break	10m
VIDEO - Arrest on Patrol	10m
ASSIGNMENT – Written Report of Video Call	35m
Questions / Wrap up	05m
End of Session / Break	10m

Total Session Time: 2 hours**Main Topics of Session:**

- *Officer's Notebooks*
- *Proper Note Taking*
- *Proper Report Writing*

Facilitators Needed: 1 (CI)**Locations:**

- *Classroom*

Materials Needed:

- *PowerPoint – Note Taking & Report Writing*
- *Video- Female Police Officer Makes Arrest on Patrol*

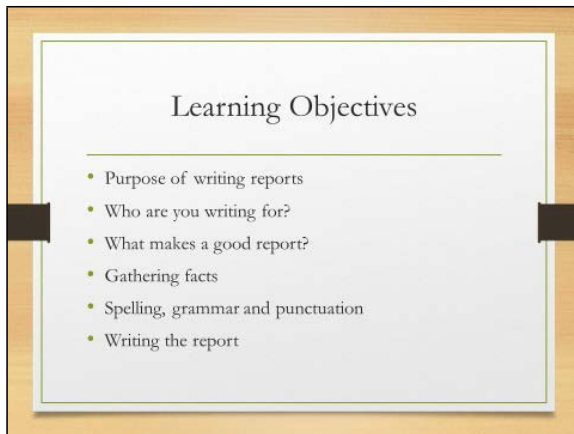
Students Should Already Have:

- *Notebooks*
[THUMB DRIVE]
- *Study Session – Officer Notebook & Note Taking*
- *Study Session – Report Writing*
- *Sample Reports*
- *Article – The Art of the Police Report*



Note Taking/ Report Writing

Facilitator Guide



Learning Objectives

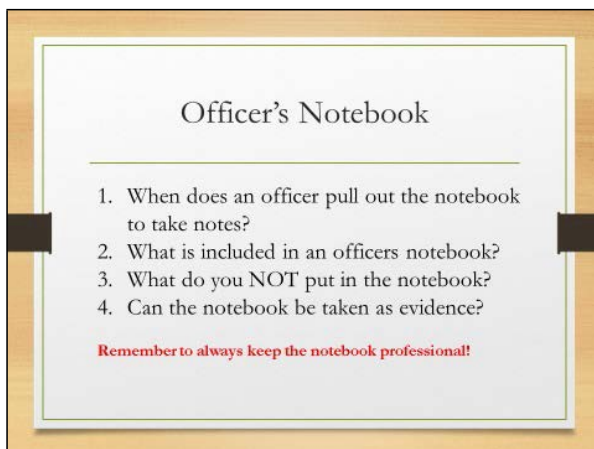
- Purpose of writing reports
- Who are you writing for?
- What makes a good report?
- Gathering facts
- Spelling, grammar and punctuation
- Writing the report



NOTE TO FACILITATOR

Using the PowerPoint slides and materials from the student study sessions, provide the students with a basic understanding of the following:

- Who will be reading the reports?
- What information should go into the report?
- How to use an officer's notebook for note taking & subsequent report writing.
- Importance of using proper grammar and punctuation.



Officer's Notebook

1. When does an officer pull out the notebook to take notes?
2. What is included in an officers notebook?
3. What do you NOT put in the notebook?
4. Can the notebook be taken as evidence?

Remember to always keep the notebook professional!



Note Taking/ Report Writing

Facilitator Guide

Why do we write reports?

- To provide a permanent record about the incident
- To assist the detective and/or prosecutor in filing charges
- To protect the interests of your agency, documenting what you learned and your actions
- To tell the “story” of what has occurred so that anyone can read this report and clearly understand what occurred

Who will read your report?

Inside your Agency

- FTO/PTO
- Sergeant
- Upper Command Staff
- Fellow recruits and officers
- Support Staff

Outside your Agency

- Prosecutor
- Defense Attorney
- Judge
- Media
- Public Disclosure Requests

First impressions are critical to your reputation

What makes a good report?

- Factual
- Identify all parties involved
- Clear and concise
- Spelling and grammar usage
- Chronological order
 - Writing a report vs a non-fiction story



Note Taking/ Report Writing

Facilitator Guide

What makes a good report?

- Factual
- Identify all parties involved
- Clear and concise
- Spelling and grammar usage
- Chronological order
 - Writing a report vs a non-fiction story

Report Writing is much like writing a non-fiction story

- Your report must be written using the following format
 - Introduction
 - Set the scene
 - Body
 - Tell the reader what happened, in chronological order
 - Closing
 - What should the reader expect to happen next?

Introduction Setting the Scene

- One of the easiest ways to get started is to start with the time/date of your arrival on scene.
 - How did you arrive at the location
 - Dispatch
 - On view
 - What did you see when you arrived?
 - Who did you contact?



Option #1

Introduction – “begins with your arrival”

First Person Begins With Your Arrival

On 09-06-2014 at 1400 hrs. I was dispatched to this location for an assault. I arrived at 1430 hrs. and observed several people standing in the street. I noticed that a man was seated on the curb and there was blood on his face.

Option #2

Introduction – “begins prior to your arrival”

First Person Begins Prior to Your Arrival

On 09-06-2014 at 1300hrs. V-Scar arrived home to find his neighbor, S-Green spraying weed killer on Scar's front lawn. Scar confronted Green, telling her that he did not want chemicals on his lawn. Green told Scar that she was sick of his weeds spreading to her yard. Scar told Green to leave his property and when she refused, he pushed her. Green responded by punching Scar in the face and then went into her house. Scar called 911 and I was dispatched at 1400hrs. I arrived at 1430hrs. and observed several people standing in the street. I noticed that a man was seated on the curb and there was blood on his face.

Body Who/What/Why/How

- Identify people at the location
 - What did they
 - See?
 - Hear?
 - Smell/taste?
 - How/or are they related to the scene/people?
 - Could this be a domestic violence call?
- What happened?
 - Keep in mind probable cause and elements of the possible crime(s)
- Identification and collection of evidence

Option #1

The body of the report – “begins with your arrival”

Body of Your Report Begins With Your Arrival

I contacted the man and identified him as V-Scar. Scar was bleeding from his nose and refused aid. According to Scar, his neighbor, S-Green punched him in the nose. Scar said that he has had an ongoing problem with Green because of all of the chemicals that she uses on her lawn. Scar said that he had told Green numerous times to keep off of his property and that she was not to spray chemicals near his property. Scar said that at about 1300 he arrived home on this date and found Green in his front yard, spraying weed killer. Scar confronted Green and told her to leave. According to Scar they continued to argue and Green refused to leave his property. Scar said that he shoved Green towards her house and it was at that time that Green punched him in the face. Scar said that Green then went back home and that Green then left her house about 10 minutes ago in her vehicle. Scar said that he wanted to press charges against Green for the assault and for trespassing.

I also contacted W-Brown who lives across the street from Scar and Green. Brown told me that Scar and Green had been fighting for years over just about everything. On this date, Brown was sitting in his front yard and heard yelling across the street. He walked to the sidewalk and could hear Scar and Green arguing about weed killer. Brown said that he was surprised to see Green punch Scar in the nose. Brown said that after Green punched him that she walked back over to her house. He said that he called 911 and then went over to see if Scar was okay. Brown also said that he saw Green leave in her Mercedes about 10 minutes ago.

I took a written statement from Scar and photographed his injuries as well as the front lawn areas of both residences. I also took a statement from Brown. I contacted the Green house, but there was no answer. I left a business card on the door, requesting that Green contact me when she returns home.

Option #2

The body of the report – “begins prior to your arrival”

Body of Your Report Begins Prior to Your Arrival

I contacted the man and identified him as Scar. Scar was bleeding from his nose and refused aid. According to Scar, his neighbor, Green punched him in the nose. Scar said that he has had an ongoing problem with Green because of all of the chemicals that she uses on her lawn. Scar said that he had told Green numerous times to keep off of his property and that she was not to spray chemicals near his property. Scar said that at about 1300 he arrived home on this date and found Green in his front yard, spraying weed killer. Scar confronted Green and told her to leave. According to Scar they continued to argue and that Green refused to leave his yard. Scar said that he pushed Green towards her property and that it was then that Green punched him in the face. Scar said that Green then went back home and that Green then left her house about 10 minutes ago in her vehicle. Scar said that he wanted to press charges against Green for the assault and for trespassing.

I also contacted W-Brown who lives across the street from Scar and Green. Brown told me that Scar and Green had been fighting for years over just about everything. On this date, Brown was sitting in his front yard and heard yelling across the street. He walked to the sidewalk and could hear Scar and Green arguing about weed killer. Brown said that he could clearly hear Scar telling Green to leave his property, but that she refused. Brown said that he watched as Scar pushed Green towards her property. I asked Brown how hard was the push and Brown said that she barely budged. Brown said that he was surprised to see Green punch Scar in the nose. Brown said that after Green punched him, that she walked back over to her house. He said that he called 911 and then went over to see if Scar was okay. Brown also said that he saw Green leave in her Mercedes about 10 minutes ago.

I took a written statement from Scar and photographed his injury as well as the front lawn areas of both residences. I also took a statement from Brown. I contacted the Green house, but there was no answer. I left a business card on the door, requesting that Green contact me when she returns home.



Closing Brief Summary and Conclusion

- Written wrap-up of your investigation
 - Bring the story to an end for the reader
 - Potential options:
 - Case referred to detectives for follow-up
 - Suspect booked into the jail for investigation of assault
 - Case for informational purposes only
 - Case submitted for review, additional follow up may be needed

Avoid leaving the reader hanging, we are not writing a "cliff hanger"

This closing works for both options

Closing

I explained to Scar how to apply for an anti-harassment order. I also cautioned Scar about pushing his neighbor and suggested that when she refused, he could have called 911 rather than physically touch her. I then cleared the scene.

I entered the photographs into evidence and submitted my report and statements for approval and referral to the prosecutor's office.

Note Taking/ Report Writing

Facilitator Guide

Writing the Report

If you are stuck on how to get started

Grab a piece of paper and jot down ideas using the format discussed prior:

- Introduction (setting the scene)
- Body (who, what, when and how)
- Conclusion (summary of facts)

Writing the Report

- Identify people involved using their last name and...
 - Victim
 - We have no idea the name of the victim
 - Scar
 - We have no idea how Scar is involved
 - V-Scar
 - We know that Scar is the victim

Spelling and Grammar

Many people inside and outside of your agency will first get to know you by your written work. Keep this in mind when you are writing your reports.

- Spelling
 - If you have problems with spelling, identify those common problem words and keep the correct spelling in your notebook.
- Grammar
 - If you have a problem in this area, keep your writing simple.



Note Taking/ Report Writing

Facilitator Guide

Writing the Report

- Remember to keep your report clear, concise and easy to follow
 - Avoid writing in one continuous paragraph
 - Makes it very difficult to read
 - Paragraphs are best
 - Don't get caught up in what makes a proper paragraph. Just keep similar information together, to assist the reader with keeping the facts clear

Questions?

**BREAK**

Note Taking/ Report Writing

Facilitator Guide



GROUP EXERCISE - Video/ Write Report

Time: 45m (10m video/ 35m report writing)

- Materials:
- Video - Female Police Officer Makes Arrest on Patrol (6 min)
 - Notebook to take notes
 - Pen

Instructions: You will be watching a video of an actual call. During this video take the appropriate notes so you can go back and complete a police report based on what you observed.

NTF: Instructor will determine when reports are due. The students will most likely not finish the report in class. It is recommended that the reports will be turned in no later than two days after the initial assignment. This may be altered due to scheduling and other possible mitigating factors. As the reviewer of the reports, key things you are looking for:

- Chronological order
- First Person
- Factual information
- Elements of crime
- Grammar



NOTE TO FACILITATOR

Take the last few minutes of class to debrief; reiterating key points that students have learned during this session.

*Stress that the student's report can make or break a case. (A poorly written report can result in the guilty going free).



BREAK/END OF SESSION

