

#72022

## WRITING . . . THE CONSTANT SEARCH

*A Dimension Film/Writer-Director Gary Goldsmith*

**Grade levels:** Junior-senior high

**Subject areas:** English: Literature & Language; Journalism; Career Education

25 minutes, color

### SYNOPSIS

A young reporter is given a feature assignment about wild animals in the city to research and write. She double checks, and then organizes her material. She looks for an attention-getting opening, and then makes sure her story flows from point to point. She keeps her vocabulary simple yet vivid, varies the length of sentences and paragraphs, and concludes with a clear ending. She then edits spelling, punctuation and grammar on her word processor. The process of writing, from idea to printed article, emerges as we watch her and listen to comments by other writers.

### OBJECTIVES

- To show the process of writing, from idea to composition;
- To motivate students to write by using the example of a young news reporter writing an interesting news story;
- To show the importance of different kinds of research such as interviews and the library, as well as double checking facts;
- To show the importance of organizing so that the opening catches attention, the rest of the article flows, and comes to a clear conclusion;
- To show the importance of key writing techniques: active verbs, direct quotations, simple vocabulary, variable sentence and paragraph length, etc.;
- To show the importance of "editing" techniques such as spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why is writing a constant search? Why does most writing involve rewriting?
2. Getting started usually involves finding out about something first. What are some of the ways we can find out or gather information? How did Jenny Campbell do it?
3. Jenny says "It's a different story for different readers." What does that mean? How does your audience affect what and how you write? How do you decide who your audience is? How would the story have come out if she wrote it only for older people such as Mrs. Harris?
4. How does an outline help develop a piece? What are its advantages and disadvantages?
5. What is the lead in a news story? Do you think a good lead is important in any kind of writing? What makes a good opening?
6. What is a thesaurus? Where else can we find alternate word choices? What are some of the things that make a good word choice? Why did Jenny choose "bundled (the babe)" rather than "tied" or "wrapped"?
7. What is the difference between an active and a passive verb? Which is more vivid: "He took Bandit away" or "Bandit was removed?" Why?
8. How does a good quotation help your writing?
9. How can a word processor aid writing? What can't it do?
10. Why is variety in sentence length and rhythm important?
11. What is the effect of incorrect grammar or spelling? If someone yawns while trying to tell you something important, what do you remember?

