Casey Dreier
Director of Advocacy for The Planetary Society

Here’s some of what I wrote in 2013:

- Magazine articles
- Investigative reporting
- Blogs
- Press releases
- Emails to Congress
- Direct mail
- White papers on space policy
- Policy guides for Congress
- TV & book reviews
- Talking Points
- Scripts for Bill Nye’s political videos
- Journalism pieces from major science conferences
- ~4 pages of emails/day

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How to Write About Science

(It’s kind of a big topic)

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remember: Science is a process; a set of conceptual tools for figuring things out.

You rarely write about the process of science,

you write about the consequences of science.

Consequences happen to people and societies,

but it’s not always immediately clear what those consequences are.
Nonfiction writing is all about providing context for the reader.

For science stories it is particularly important to provide the *human* context.

Don’t be afraid to talk about spirituality or emotion, where appropriate.

You’re writing for people, not robots. Don’t deny the existence of the human condition.

How to Write About Science

**Step (1)**
*Write a crappy first draft.*

**Step (2)**
*Revise.*

**Step (3)**
*Repeat step (2) until done (or due).*
I should probably add at this point that you should also **read** as much science writing as possible—mainly the good stuff.

*Ask yourself: am I bored? If so, why? If not, what was so engaging?*

*Then copy (not in a plagiaristic way) what works until you’re good at it.*

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**How to Write Congress**

Writing your representatives presents a challenge: how to get your point across most effectively?

Strategic writing focused on the reader:

- High signal-to-noise (no chatter).
- Be exceptionally clear.
- Create shortcuts to focus their attention (bullet points, bold text, short paragraphs, etc.).
- Use formal English syntax.

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Dear Senator Feinstein,

As a frequent voter and your constituent, I write to you out of grave concern for our country’s planetary exploration program. NASA’s Planetary Science Division, responsible for programs such as the Curiosity rover on Mars and the Cassini orbiter at Saturn, has suffered repeated funding cuts by the Office of Management and Budget. As a result, we’ve seen missions delayed and cancelled, international partnerships broken, and an immeasurable loss of science. A generation of citizens stands to lose access to the solar system.

It doesn’t have to be this way. I urge you to restore funding for NASA’s Planetary Science Division to $1.5 billion per year, its historical average.

I ask that you work with your colleagues on the Senate Appropriations Committee to achieve the following:

• Restore funding for NASA’s Planetary Science Division to its historical average of $1.5 billion per year for the next five years.
• Ensure that NASA pursues a balanced program of planetary exploration as defined in the National Research Council’s Decadal Survey report, including a sample return from Mars and a mission to Europa.
• Maintain operations of existing spacecraft to ensure taxpayers get the highest science return on their fiscal investment.

I strongly encourage you to join with your colleagues to restore planetary science funding to a minimum of $1.5 billion per year in order to maintain NASA’s leadership in space exploration. This keeps the United States competitive through its inspirational imagination, educational opportunities, scientific return, and engineering challenges.

Sincerely,

Casey Dreier
Pasadena, CA

planetary.org/SOS