Relating an Event

Learning the Skill

Suppose you missed an important event like a playoff game, a party, or a student council meeting. “What happened?” you ask. A friend gives you a confusing ramble that is hard to follow. You roll your eyes and say, “Just give me the basics.” You need to know: What happened? Who was involved? Where did this occur? When did it occur? Why did it happen? How did it come about?

These “basics” are known as the 5 Ws and H. This organizational format can help writers describe events in a manner that is clear and concise. To relate an event, do the following:

• Write down notes that answer the 5 Ws and H questions.
• Summarize the most important information in a few paragraphs.
• Expand your paragraphs with details that elaborate on the 5 Ws and H.
• Prioritize your details by order of importance.

Practicing the Skill

Directions: Imagine you are a reporter who has been assigned to cover a debate about the ownership of the Rosetta Stone and other artifacts from ancient civilizations. Follow the guidelines below, and then answer the questions that follow.

First, you consult the following sources for background information on the controversy of ownership of ancient artifacts:

• the Internet
• printed reference materials such as books, newspapers, and magazines that focus on the topic

Next, you attend a debate on the issue.

• Time: Wednesday, October 7th, at 8 P.M.
• Place: The Edwina J. Wellesley Auditorium
• Participants: Zahi Hawass, Egypt’s Secretary General of the Supreme Council of Antiquities, who favors returning artifacts to their native countries, and Peter Lacovara, Curator of the Michael C. Carlos Museum in Atlanta, Georgia, who favors leaving many artifacts in museums

Finally, prepare to write your article by answering the following questions.
Writing Skills Activity
continued

1. Who was involved in the debate?

2. What issues were discussed at the debate? Summarize the basic points.

3. Where did the debate occur?

4. When did it occur?

5. How did this controversy develop? Why did European museums end up with so many relics, and why did they believe they should keep them? Why did Egyptians feel so strongly about the ancient relics?

Assessment Checklist
Assess your article using the checklist below:

- Addressed the 5 Rs and H
- Included details that elaborated upon the basic 5 Rs and H
- Organized the information from most important to least important
- Wrote in complete and clear sentences
- Proofread spelling, grammar, and punctuation

Applying the Skill
Directions: On another sheet of paper, use your answers to the 5 Rs and H to help you write an article about the artifacts debate. Remember to lead with the most important information.