<u>Setting the Scene for Elections & Campaigns</u>

1. **<u>Consider this the story that INTRODUCES voters to the candidates and the issues in the upcoming election.</u>**
   - ✓ Many will not yet be tuned in to the election at all – or very little.
   - ✓ If it's well done, it may actually make them INTERESTED in the election.
   - ✓ That's Grimes' 3rd Law: *You can get almost anyone to pay attention to almost anything, if you write it right.*

2. **<u>Think about: What do voters need to know FIRST?</u>**
   - ✓ Who's running for what?
   - ✓ Tell the simple, basic info of which offices are up for election / Who's running for each.
   - ✓ Consider these to be mini-profiles of each candidate.
   - ✓ Is there likely to be a primary election?
   - ✓ Heck, what IS a primary election?
   - ✓ When will the primaries be? (Each party has its own primary. So we use the plural of "primaries" if there's more than one party having a primary.)
   - ✓ When's the general election?
   - ✓ NOTE: Every story MUST have the date of the election – and, if applicable, the date of the primaries.
   - ✓ Give simple, clear basic bio/experience info on EACH candidate.

3. **<u>Give the context.</u>**
   - ✓ If the election is for a legislative body (House of Representatives/Senate/Common Council, General Assembly), tell how many seats/members are in the body.
   - ✓ Tell how many are up for election – and how many are contested.
   - ✓ It's significant, for example, if all seats of the legislative body (like the House of Representatives or state assembly or county legislature) are up for election.
   - ✓ Tell which party has control – or is the majority – of the legislative body. How many seats are held by each party?
   - ✓ Explain the jargon: *<u>Midterm elections</u>*, for example. And an *<u>open seat</u>* or *<u>open race</u>*.

✓ What's the voter registration or enrollment for each party? Who has the advantage? How many are unaffiliated with any party (that's lower-case independent).

✓ Anything historic or rare or unusual about this particular election?

4. <u>Explain the political stakes.</u>

✓ Is control – the majority – of the legislative body up for grabs? Likely to change? Unlikely to change? Why or why not?

✓ If there is recent poll information, you can include some info on who's ahead. But first tell the basics!

5. <u>Remember to always include the essential background info:</u>

✓ Be sure to give party affiliation and geographic indentifiers for each candidate (U.S. Rep. Dan Maffei, D-DeWitt, for example).

✓ Give the description of the district.

✓ EVERY story will have ALL the candidates, identified by party, geography and some brief description.

✓ Give the brief description of the district.

6. <u>Explain the key issues!</u>

✓ Include some info on candidates' stands on these!

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