



TIPS to IMPROVE YOUR WRITING

Trainer: Val Moeller
retire2k07@aol.com

December 12, 2018

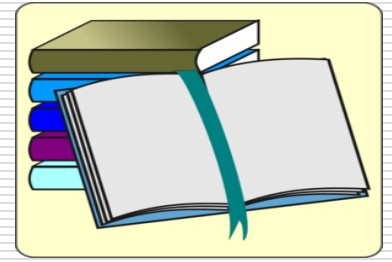


Writing is unique to humans
because we are thinkers.

Thinking promotes writing.

Writing promotes thinking, etc.

WRITING



A Skill that can be Learned

Improvement Comes From:

■ PRACTICE

■ READING

■ LISTENING

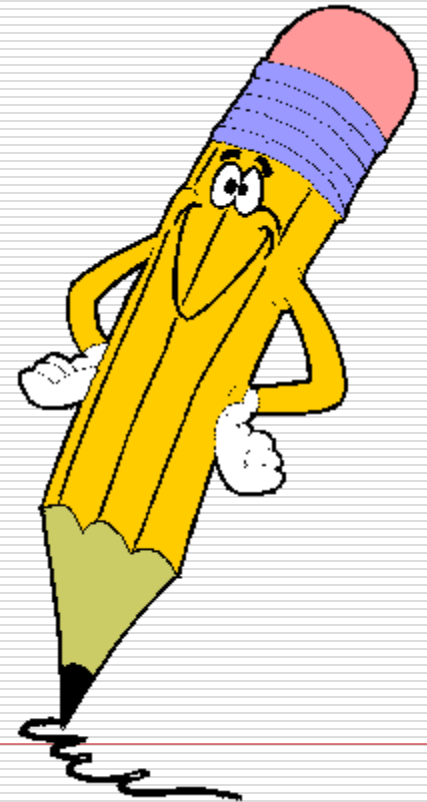
Objectives - Write

- ✓ Clear, Concise, Correct Correspondence with...
- ✓ Pertinent Information
- ✓ that is Geared to Your **READER'S NEEDS**



Six Cs of Good Business Writing

- Completeness
- Correctness
- Clearness
- Conciseness
- Concreteness
- Courtesy



COMPLETENESS

- ✓ Have you included everything that is important or pertinent to say?
- ✓ Did you tell the whole story using the fewest possible words?
- ✓ Good writing includes everything the reader/decision-maker needs to know.
- ✓ It includes everything essential and nothing more.



CORRECTNESS

- Check spelling, names, dates, numbers, grammar, punctuation, etc.
- Correct grammar is another aspect of appearance. If you want your ideas to be respected, you need to write correctly.
- You must read through your final drafts carefully, looking for errors.
- Insure that your reader's attention will be focused on your message, NOT on your errors.



CLEARNESS

Communication – Have I used too many words to express simple, unimportant, or obvious ideas?

WORDY	CLEAR
The staples had the effect of a destructive force on the duplicator. (12 words)	The staples destroyed the duplicator. (5 words)
We have enclosed a pamphlet that shows further information about resumes on page four. (14 words)	REWRITE THE SENTENCE

✓ PLAIN, DISTINCT, EVIDENT, TRANSPARENT, EASILY UNDERSTOOD

CONCISENESS



- ✓ Have I used vague words instead of more vivid and convincing specific words?
- ✓ Did I write to make the intent clear and specific?
- ✓ Have I used **ONLY** the essential words to get my message across to my reader?

WORDY	CONCISE
1. The use of good telephone equipment is one of our primary needs. (12 words)	EX – We must use good telephone equipment. (6 words)
2. This manual was prepared to aid our staff in being helpful to their customers. (14 words)	
3. It is the responsibility of our Appeals Unit to verify that the determination meets the requirements of the UI code. (20 words)	

CONCISENESS continued...

Many pairs of words imply each other. Finish implies complete, so completely finish is redundant.

Cross out the redundant words in the following pairs:

each individual

various differences

true facts

future plans

terrible tragedy

final outcome

past history

past memories

basic fundamentals

important essentials

sudden crisis

end result

free gift

unexpected surprise

REWRITE THE SENTENCE BELOW

Before the travel agent was completely able to finish explaining the various differences among all of the many vacation packages her travel agency was offering, the customer changed his future plans.

CONCISENESS continued...

Specific words imply general categories, so usually we don't have to use both. We know that time is a period, that green is a color, that shiny is an appearance.

Cross out the redundant words in the following pairs:

large in size

of a bright color

heavy in weight

round in shape

at an early time

honest in character

in a confused state

extreme in degree

economics field

area of mathematics

Rewrite the following sentence:

During that time period in the 70s, many EDD office managers tended to use desks that were gray in color and dull in appearance.

CONCISENESS continued...

Meaningless Modifiers

Modifier – to change slightly or alter the meaning

Some modifiers are delaying tactics that we use almost unconsciously. These words can be eliminated to make the sentence clearer. Review the list below:

kind of	sort of	really	basically
definitely	actually	generally	specific
very	for all intents and purposes		

Rewrite the following sentence:

For all intents and purposes, American industrial productivity generally depends on certain factors that are really more psychological in kind than of any given technological aspect.

CONCISENESS continued...

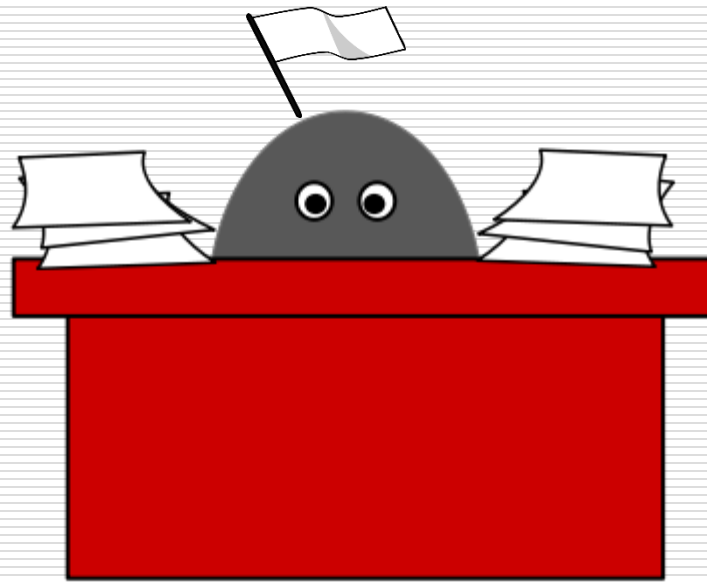
Excessive Detail – Sometimes we provide irrelevant details or more information than readers need.

Phrases for Words – Another kind of redundancy results from using phrases when a well chosen word or two will suffice.

Rewrite the following sentence:

Baseball, one of our oldest and most popular outdoor summer sports in terms of total attendance at ball parks and viewing on television, has the kind of rhythm of play on the field that alternates between the players passively waiting with no action taking place between the pitches to the batter and exploding into actions when the batter hits a pitched ball to one of the players and he fields it.

Ready to Give Up??



Never Give Up!

CONCISENESS continued...

Some common phrases that can be eliminated or compressed:

WORDY	CONCISE
for the reason that due to the fact that in light of the fact that considering the fact that on the grounds that this is why	because, since, why
as regards to in reference to with regard to concerning the matter of	about

CONCISENESS continued...

is able to is in a position to has the opportunity to has the capacity for has the ability to	can
on the occasion of in a situation in which	when
it is crucial that it is necessary that there is a need	must, should
it is possible that there is a chance that it could happen that the possibility exists for	maybe, perhaps, may might

CONCISENESS – continued...

Other Unnecessary Words

- Unnecessary articles (a, an, the)
Example – The evidence we have
Revised – Evidence we have
 - Unnecessary that, who, and which clauses
Example – All applicants who are interested in the job must
Revised – All interested job applicants must
 - Unnecessary there is and there are sentence beginnings
Example – There are four rules to observe
Revised – Four rules to observe are
 - Unnecessary passives
Example – An account was opened by Mrs. Smith
Revised – Mrs. Smith opened an account
 - Unnecessary infinitive phrases (infinitive phrase = to + verb)
Example – The duty of a clerk is to check incoming mail and record it
Revised – A clerk checks and records incoming mail
-

CONCRETENESS - REAL, ACTUAL, Referring to a particular, specific, not general or abstract

- ✓ Have I keyed the language to my reader's understanding?
The first sentence below is an example of an excessive, overwritten sentence reduced to three words without loss of meaning.

EXCESSIVE, OVERWRITTEN	CONCRETE
1. The choice of exogenous variables in relation to multi-collinearity is contingent upon the derivations of certain multiple correlation coefficients.	Supply determines demand.
2. The defendant is renowned as a person of intemperate habits. He is known to partake heavily of intoxicating beverages. Further, he cultivates the company of others of the distaff side, and wholly, regularly refuses and abstains from earnest endeavors to gain money.	

COURTESY – polite, gracious, considerate remark

Have I expressed my ideas so the reader will feel I am helpful courteous, and human? Have I avoided using an authoritarian tone when telling others what to do?

TACTLESS	TACTFUL
1. You neglected to take care of the requirements on form DE 239.	To avoid any delay in payment, please follow the from DE 239 procedures.
2. You must follow our instructions.	To keep your claim active, please complete form _____ by (date). Thank you.
3. You must use the computers in the lobby for UI information. I cannot help you.	

COURTESY continued...

- ✓ Have I emphasized “you” the reader, as well as “I or we?”

“WE” Attitude	“YOU” Attitude
We regret that you’ve had so much trouble with our service. We apologize for not solving your problem sooner.	You were right to ask me about your problems with our service. Thank you for this opportunity to answer your questions.

- ✓ Have I tactfully avoided words and phrases that imply that my reader is dishonest, careless, or mentally deficient.

1. In order to complete your claim, you must...	To complete your claim, please.....
2. Obviously, if you’d read our procedures carefully, you’d be able to answer these questions yourself.	

COURTESY – Select a Better Tone

❑ Correct the following

“You neglected to take care of the requirements on the form DE...”



WHAT ARE THE SIX Cs???

- Complete, Correct, Clear, Concise, Concrete, and Courteous

HOW TO BEGIN WRITING

Decide Purpose

Define Audience

Brainstorm

Outline/Mind Map

Write a Draft



OUTLINE

- Organizational Pattern
- Visual/Conceptual Design
- Organizes Your Ideas
- Presents Material Logically
- Shows Relationship of Ideas



WRITE A DRAFT

- ✓ Begin Anywhere
- ✓ Discuss Aloud
- ✓ Put it Away
- ✓ Ask someone else to review
- ✓ Revisions
- ✓ Proofread
- ✓ Revisions
- ✓ Proofread



WRITING

- ✓ A skill that can be learned.
- ✓ Improvement comes from:

Practice

Reading

Listening

Practice

Reading

Listening



SUMMARY

QUESTIONS TO ASK

1. What is the PURPOSE in writing this memo or report?
 2. Does my communication give all the information needed to accomplish this purpose?
 3. What purpose does this communication serve for my READER?
 4. Do I need to answer the question "So What?" In other words, do I tell the reader WHY the memo is worth reading?
 5. What does my reader want or need to know to enable him/her to UNDERSTAND my message?
-

ADDITIONAL SUMMARY QUESTIONS

6. Does my memo or report ANSWER all the questions my reader has asked or questions he/she may have in mind (WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY, and HOW)?
 7. Have I included ONLY the material essential to my reader's purpose and understanding? Am I boring or distracting my reader with unessential or obvious information?
 8. What do I want my reader to do when he/she finished reading my memo/report etc.?
 9. Have I included all the information needed to enable my reader to easily take action or make a decision?
-

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

- Detailed Material
- Complex information
- Reader has Time to Think
- Defuses Emotional Response
- Record Exists
- Less Argument over Intent

