GR8 4 U, NSFW

Back to Basics Business Writing

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Audience

- Leadership and staff
- Elected officials
- Consultants, contractors, vendors
- Procurement professionals
- Other professionals
- The public
- The media
Writing is a process

- Plan
- Draft
- Revise
- Edit
- Final
How bad can it be?

- Cascade this to your people and see what the push-back is.
- The library has been liberated.
- Gridlock occurred due to failure of an electronically adjusted, color-coded vehicular-flow control mechanism.
- Let’s revisit that issue to align our end-state visions.
- An expenditure of $35 was initiated for a hundred wood stimulators.
- The department experienced advanced downward adjustments.
Basic Do’s

• Applicable form
• Active voice
• Plain language
• Consistent tense
• Concise content
• Appropriate tone
Basic Don’ts

- Passive voice
- Vague statements
- Jokes and anecdotes
- Clichés
- Unsupported facts
- Slang, buzzwords
No excuses!

- Mispellings
- Fatuous flora and fauna
- To much or two little punctuation
- “Gratuitous” emphasis!
- Two many repetitions of to many words
- Bad grammar
- Too short or two long sentences
- For all intensive purposes…
Mispelled or misspelled?

• Separate, Separate
• Definite, Definite
• Calendar, Calendar
• Mispell, Misspell
• Privilege, Privilege
• Argument, Argument
• Consensus, Consensus
• Pronunciation, Pronunciation
• Accommodate, Accommodate
• Dependant, Dependent
Multiple choice

We went to ______________ house.
  a. there  
  b. their  
  c. they’re

I have ______________ dogs, ______________ !
  a. to  
  b. two  
  c. too
Letters and e-mails

- Clear subject line

- Greeting
  - Letter: Dear Mr./Ms.
  - E-mail: First name

- Body
  - Logical progression
  - Consistent paragraphs

- Closing
  - Letter: Sincerely, Respectfully
  - E-mail: Thank you
Concise content

• **Active voice**
  - Before: The meeting was seen by us as a ploy to delay the project
  - After: We saw the meeting as a ploy to delay the project.

• **Words, not definitions**
  - Before: The product needed to be marketable so the company would be able to sell any items in excess of its internal needs.
  - After: The product needed to be marketable so the company could sell any surplus.

• **Make nouns verbs**
  - Before: They will collaborate in the creation of new guidelines.
  - After: They will collaborate to create new guidelines
Concise content

• Simple words
  • Before: The agency will disseminate the information in the near future.
  • After: The agency will share the information soon.

• Simple verbs
  • Before: The results are suggestive of the fact that there was a conflict of interest.
  • After: The results suggest there was a conflict.

• Single words
  • Before: Due to the fact that many of the attendees are absent, today’s meeting has been postponed.
  • After: Because many attendees are absent, today’s meeting is postponed.
Tone

- His men would follow him anywhere, but only out of morbid curiosity.
- Some drink from the fountain of knowledge, he only gargled.
- The wheel is turning, but the hamster is dead.
- A gross ignoramus, 144 times worse than an ordinary ignoramus.
- This young lady has delusions of adequacy.
- He would be out of his depth in a parking lot puddle.
- The gates are down, the lights are flashing, but the train isn't coming.
Know the tone

- Why am I writing?
  - Report, documentation
  - Communication
- Who am I writing for?
  - Myself
  - My supervisor
  - My organization
- Who am I writing to?
  - Staff, superiors
  - Public, media
- What do I want the reader to get from it?
  - Notice of action
  - Understanding of event
  - New information
Tone is feeling

- Impersonal
- Respectful
- Optimistic
- Reflective
- Friendly
- Compassionate
- Passionate
- Intimidating
- Objective
<table>
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### Just fun!

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Extras

- http://mla.org
- http://dictionary.com
- http://ourenglishclass.net
- http://dailywritingtips.com
- http://managementhelp.org/businesswriting/
- http://score.org

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