

WRITING SKILLS

WRITING

- ✖ Writing is a form of communication that involves expressing yourself clearly, using language with precision; constructing a logical argument; note taking, editing and summarising; and writing reports
- ✖ Written Communication is the putting of message in print form

WRITING PROCESS

- ✖ Preparation (Pre-writing)
- ✖ Writing the 1st draft (Drafting)
- ✖ Editing & Revision of the Draft
- ✖ Final draft
- ✖ Review activities

ELEMENTS OF WRITING

- ✖ There are three main elements to written communication
 - + **Structure** (the way the content is laid out)
 - + **Style** (the way it is written)
 - + **Content** (what you are writing about)

STRUCTURE

- ✗ Clarify your thoughts and the purpose
- ✗ Identify the key points, facts and themes
- ✗ Decide on a logical order
- ✗ **Compose a strong introduction and ending**
 - + The first will make an immediate and positive impression on the reader;
 - + The second will remain in their mind after they have finished reading
- ✗ **Use short paragraphs and sentences** rather than long, rambling ones
 - + Keep to one idea per paragraph and put your point in the first line, then add the supporting information.
- ✗ **Help key points to stand out**
 - + By the use of headings, sub-headings and bullet points. This will allow your reader to quickly scan your message for the main points.

STYLE

- ✖ **How formal or informal should your writing be?**
 - + Formal Writing
 - + Analytical Writing
 - + Narrative Writing
- ✖ **How much information and detail will they need?**
- ✖ **Should you use specialist terms or should you “translate” these to make yourself understood by a generalist reader?**

STYLE

✕ Check for the 7Cs:

- + Clear ;- Use precise, vigorous words and active voice
- + Conversational ;- Group your ideas, no trite phrases, no jargon, no pompous, "lawyer" language
- + Courteous ;- Use straightforward, respectful tone
- + Coherent ;- Use transitions and order ideas logically
- + Concise ;- No redundancies: not wordy, minimal use of perfect tense
- + Complete ;- No assumptions: use adequate detail and audience perspective evidence
- + Correct ;- Accurate information: error free

CONTENT

Remember your ABCS

a) Accuracy

Some of the details that must be double checked include:

- Time and Date say for the meeting, delivery, etc
- Title and Name of the person or Company
- Reasons for writing
- Figures

b) Brevity

For example how can these be expressed more briefly?

- ✗ ×Please be informed that this order will be dispatched to you on 12 July
- ✓ Order will be ready on 12 July

CONTENT

c) Clarity

There is need to use clear language which the reader will understand.

What can we use instead of these words or phrases?

- ✗ Commence ✓ Start
- ✗ Utilise ✓ Use
- ✗ Terminate ✓ Stop
- ✗ Purchase ✓ Buy
- ✗ Come to a decision ✓ Decide
- ✗ Give consideration to ✓ Consider
- ✗ At the present moment in time ✓ Now

CONTENT

✕ d) Simplicity

- + *Simplicity is the final achievement. After one has played a vast quantity of notes and more notes, it is simplicity that emerges as the crowning reward of written art*

GUIDE TO EFFECTIVE WRITING

✕ The Sentence

- + What is a sentence?
- + Types of sentences
- + Editing sentences for coherence
- + Combining sentences to improve “flow”

✕ The Paragraph

- + What is a paragraph?
- + Sentences as building blocks of paragraphs
- + Central idea
- + Unity
- + Coherence
- + Content—evidence and details
- + Using transitions to improve “flow”

GUIDE TO EFFECTIVE WRITING

✖ The Essay

- + What is an essay?
- + Thesis statement/controlling idea
- + Paragraphs as building blocks of the essay
- + Organization
- + Using transitions between paragraphs to improve “flow”

✖ A Writer's Grammar

- + Sentence fragments
- + Comma splices and fused sentences
- + Accurate and clear pronoun reference
- + Various uses of the comma, the semicolon, and the apostrophe.

GUIDE TO EFFECTIVE WRITING

✕ Specific Areas of Focus

- + Verbs
- + Articles
- + Voice: Active and passive
- + Nouns and Pronouns
- + Adjectives and adverbs
- + Prepositions
- + Word order
- + Idiomatic expressions

✕ Academic Skills

- + Note-taking
- + Reading and understanding essay's
- + Using the dictionary
- + Improving vocabulary

WRITING CHECKLIST

✖ Structure (the way the content is laid out)

- + Is the **layout** clear and easy to follow?
- + Do **headings** stand out (e.g. are they in a larger font size)?
- + Is the information arranged in a **logical sequence** with a beginning (introduction), middle, and end (conclusion)?
- + Does the introduction clearly state the **subject and purpose**?
- + Does it **briefly summarise** the content?

WRITING CHECKLIST

✖ Style (the way it is written)

- + Does it look **neat, and elegant**?
- + Is it **concise**, with an exact use of words and economy of style?
- + *"If in doubt, cut it out!"*. Learn to be laconic!
For example instead of saying forward planning, just say planning - there is no such thing as backward planning!
Words such as very, just, quite, perhaps, maybe and really should all be removed
- + Microsoft's new CEO used 3,000 words to communicate what he wanted from his staff.
Bill Gates used 11 words: *'To put a computer on every desk and in every home'*.

WRITING CHECKLIST

✖ Style (the way it is written)

- + Is it simple, direct and lucid?
- + Are **paragraphs too long**?
Paragraphs of less than 10 lines are easier to read.
- + Is a **blank line left between paragraphs** to aid clarity?
- + Are **sentences too long**? A sentence should contain just one idea. Sentences with more than 30 words should normally be split.

WRITING CHECKLIST

✖ Style (the way it is written)

- + Is the **first sentence interesting**/ Does it draw the reader in?
- + Have you avoided unnecessary **jargon**? *"I seamlessly monetized the leverage to our solutions management"*
- + Is the style **suitable for the intended audience**?
A scientific report aimed at an audience of non-scientists would have to be written in simpler and more jargon free language.
- + Have you used **short, concrete, familiar words** rather than long, obscure, complex words?

WRITING CHECKLIST

- **Style (the way it is written)**
 - + Use the **active words** where possible rather than the passive voice? "*It is recommended*" should be replaced by "*We recommend*" as this is simpler and more direct
 - + Are **bulleted lists** used where appropriate?
 - + Have you kept **wordy phrases** to a minimum?
 - + Have you **avoided repetition**?

WRITING CHECKLIST

✖ Content (what you are writing about)

- + Have you carefully checked the **spelling and punctuation**?
- + Have you **thought through in advance** what you want to say?
- + Have you a **clear objective**?
- + Have you **listed the essential points** you wish to make?
- + Have you **made these points clearly**?
- + Have you **developed your argument** in a logical way?

WRITING CHECKLIST

✖ Content (what you are writing about)

- + Have you **allowed detail to obscure the main issues**?
- + Is the content **positive and constructive**?
- + Have you **shown an interest in the reader** by writing with warmth, sensitivity and friendliness?
- + Have you **edited it through several revisions**, honing the text until it is just right?
- + Have you **left it overnight** if possible: your mind will assimilate it better and you will come back with a fresh view.