TECHNICAL ENGLISH

British Council – Business Communication -

https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/business-english/youre-hired

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WHAT IS WRONG HERE?

- "You failed to pay your account on time."
- "Training Associates wishes to announce its newest product."
- "Send in the enclosed card without delay."
- "Once again, you've managed to bring down the website through your incompetent programming."
- "You have been sitting in our order for two weeks, and we need it now!"

TEST YOURSELF –

- **1. Are you a self starter?**

- *a. I only make an effort when I want to.*

- *b. If someone explains what to do, then I can continue from there.*

- *c. I make my own decisions. I don't need anyone to tell me what to do.*

2. How do you get on with other people?

- *a. I get on with almost everybody.*

- *b. I have my own friends and I don't really need anyone else.*

- *c. I don't really feel at home with other people.*

3. Can you lead and motivate others?

a. Once something is moving I'll join in.

b. I'm good at giving orders when I know what to do.

c. I can persuade most people to follow me when I start something.

4. Can you take responsibility?

a. I like to take charge and to obtain results.

b. I'll take charge if I have to but I prefer someone else to be responsible.

c. Someone always wants to be the leader and I'm happy to let them do the job.

5. Are you a good organizer?

a. I tend to get confused when unexpected problems arise.

b. I like to plan exactly what I'm going to do.

c. I just like to let things happen.

6. How good a worker are you?

a. I'm willing to work hard for something I really want.

b. I find my home environment more stimulating than work.

c. Regular work suits me but I don't like it to interfere with my private life.

7. Can you make decisions?

a. I am quite happy to execute other people's decisions.

b. I often make very quick decisions which usually work but sometimes don't.

c. Before making a decision, I need time to think it over.

➡️ **8. Do you enjoy taking risks?**

➡️ *a. I always evaluate the exact dangers of any situation.*

➡️ *b. I like the excitement of taking big risks.*

➡️ *c. For me safety is the most important thing.*

9. Can you stay the course?

a. The biggest challenge for me is getting a project started.

b. If I decide to do something, nothing will stop me.

c. If something doesn't go right first time, I tend to lose interest.

10. Are you motivated by money?

a. For me, job satisfaction cannot be measured in money terms.

b. Although money is important to me, I value other things just as much.

c. Making money is my main motivation.

➡️ **11. How do you react to criticism?**

➡️ *a. I dislike any form of criticism.*

➡️ *b. If people criticize me I always listen and may or may not reject what they have to say.*

➡️ *c. When people criticize me there is usually some truth in what they say.*

12. Can people believe what you say?

a. I try to be honest, but it is sometimes difficult or too complicated to explain things to other people.

b. I don't say things I don't mean.

c. When I think I'm right, I don't care what anyone else thinks.

13. Do you delegate?

a. I prefer to delegate what I consider to be the least important tasks.

b. When I have a job to do I like to do everything myself.

c. Delegating is an important part of any job.

▶ **14. Can you cope with stress?**

▶ *a. Stress is something I can live with.*

▶ *b. Stress can be a stimulating element in a business.*

▶ *c. I try to avoid situations which lead to stress.*

15. How do you view your chances of success?

a. I believe that my success will depend to a large degree on factors outside my control.

b. I know that everything depends on me and my abilities.

c. It is difficult to foresee what will happen in the future.

- **16. If the business was not making a profit after five years, what would you do?**

- *a. give up easily.*

- *b. give up reluctantly.*

- *c. carry on.*

Key to the questionnaire:

1. a=0 b=2 c=4 9. a=2 b=4 c=0

2. a=4 b=2 c=0 10. a=0 b=2 c=4

3. a=0 b=2 c=4 11. a=0 b=4 c=2

4. a=4 b=2 c=0 12. a=2 b=4 c=0

5. a=2 b=4 c=0 13. a=2 b=0 c=4

6. a=4 b=0 c=2 14. a=2 b=4 c=0

7. a=0 b=4 c=2 15. a=0 b=4 c=2

8. a=2 b=4 c=0 16. a=4 b=2 c=0

How would you generally feel happy or unhappy, if you were in the following situations. Use the words in italics to help you decide:

- **1. The company you work for is well-known for its *job security*.**

- **2. You were suddenly made *redundant*.**

- **3. You received a *promotion*.**

- **4. You were given an *increment*.**

- **5. You worked *unsociable hours*.**

- **6. You had a *steady job*.**

- **7. You had *adverse working conditions*.**

- **8. You suddenly found yourself *unemployed*.**

- **9. You took time off work because of *repetitive strain injury*.**
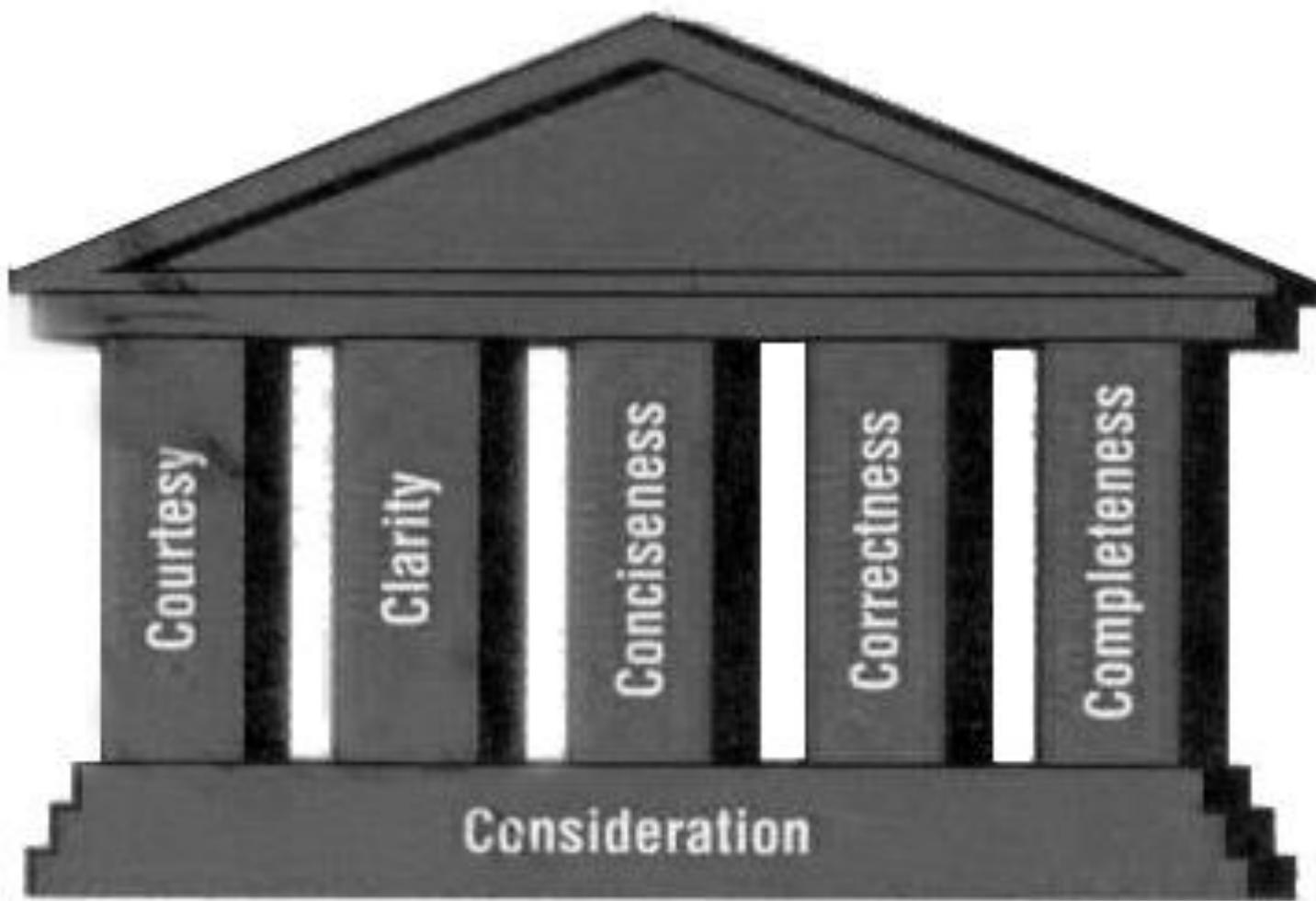
- **10. The office where you work has *sick building syndrome*.**

- **11. You receive regular *perks as part of your job.***

- **12. Somebody called you a *workaholic.***

- **13. Your company doesn't give you many *incentives.***

- **14. Your boss announces that there is going to be some *downsizing of the workforce.***

- **15. Your work didn't offer much *job satisfaction.***

- **16. Your company has a generous *incentive scheme*.**
- **17. You receive a *commission for the work you have done*.**
- **18. You receive support from a *union*.**
- **19. You were under *stress*.**
- **20. You were forced to *resign*.**

- **21. You received a cut in your *salary*.**
- **22. Your company gave you *sickness benefit*.**
- **23. You found your job very *demanding*.**

➡ WHAT DO GOOD COMMUNICATORS DO?

1.COURTESY:

- Dr., Mr., Miss., Ms., or Mrs.
- "Dear Mr. Bharath" is far more courteous than "Dear Bharath".
- Sorry, please, thank you….

- Courtesy is expected even when you are in a position to give order.

- *Discourteous:* *"Send a cheque today to bring your account up to date.*

- *Courteous:* *"Please send a cheque today to bring your account up to date."*

Bad example:

Hi Drew,

I really do not appreciate how your IT team ignores the requests of my team alone. My team is an important function in this organization too and we have our own IT requirement. Can you ensure that your team responds promptly to my team's requests hereon?

Regards,

Stanley

Good example:

Hi Drew,

I understand that the IT team is swamped with work and gets requests from every department in the organization. My team however is working on a high-priority project and I would greatly appreciate if you could ask your team members to respond to my team's queries promptly and help us complete this project on time. Please do let me know if you need anything from me.

Regards,
Stanley

- *Discourteous:* "We received your complaint of January 16".

- *Courteous:* "We received your letter of January 16 in which you express concern about the performance of your new washing machine."

- *Discourteous:* *"Your claim that the installation manual was not included with your computer is not true."*

- *Courteous:* *"Enclosed is a manual that will help you quickly and easily install your computer."*

- *Courteous:* *"Your request for an installation manual was received today. Please check with your dealer for a replacement".*

2. CLARITY -

- Do not try to communicate too many things in one message. This will dilute the attention of the reader..

Bad example:

▶ **Dear James,**

▶ **I would like to talk to you about the new client's project which the engineering team had discussed yesterday. I might need the help of John from your team.**

▶ **Regards,
Kevin**

Good example:

- **Dear James,**

- **As you may know we have signed up XYZ as our new client. I had a meeting with the engineering team yesterday and had discussed the campaign requirements for this project. John Redden from your team had done a pretty good job last time doing the social media campaign for ABC and so I would like him to work on the XYZ campaign too. Would you be available sometime tomorrow to discuss this further?**

- **Regards**
  Kevin

Clarity may also require visuals, such as tables, graphs, pie charts, or other illustrations. Visuals aid understanding by clarifying meaning and allowing quick understanding of concepts.

3. CONCISENESS -

- Effective messages use the fewest number of words possible.

Bad example:

Hi Suzanne

I think we need to talk about the CSR campaign, I mean the one which we need to do as a quarterly exercise. I think it is a great way of enhancing our brand image. Basically, it would just be a visit to an orphanage but we can sort of do other things too. For instance, we could take the kids out for a short trip to a nearby park or zoo. Let us sit and talk tomorrow.

Regards

Jennifer

Good example:

- **Hi Suzanne**

- **I need to discuss the quarterly CSR campaign with you. Let us take the kids out this time to a nearby park or zoo instead of just visiting them. This will help enhance our brand image. We'll talk in detail tomorrow.**

- **Regards**

  Jennifer

▶ *Wordy: "The protracted appendage of the self-acting stimulus-response apparatus is immobilized, thus arresting its facility to move into an upraised state the automobile assembly components."*

▶ *Concise: "The robot's arm is stuck and won't pick up the car parts."*

- If you want to communicate effectively, get to the point.

- Never use a long word when a short word will do.

- Omit excessive adjectives and adverbs.

- Use primarily short, simple sentences and active verbs.

- Compose concise paragraphs.

- Long paragraphs discourage the reader, because they look difficult or are tedious to read.

- Good goals for business letters and memos are to write paragraphs of not more than five typed lines.

CORRECTNESS :

➤ **Wrong information may cause confusion or lead to bad decisions.**

Bad example:

- **Dear David,**

- **Further to our conservation today, I am attaching the plan for the first stage of the project. Hope the one weak deadline is okay with you and your team.**

- **Regards**
  Sally

COMPLETENESS:

"Please send me information about your resort and your cabins for rent. In addition, it would be appreciated if you would reserve a cabin for the next school vacation. Please include pictures. Thank you for sending this information as soon as possible."

Is this message complete?

Bad example:

- Hi all,

- Let us meet tomorrow to discuss the product launch event. Please be there on time.
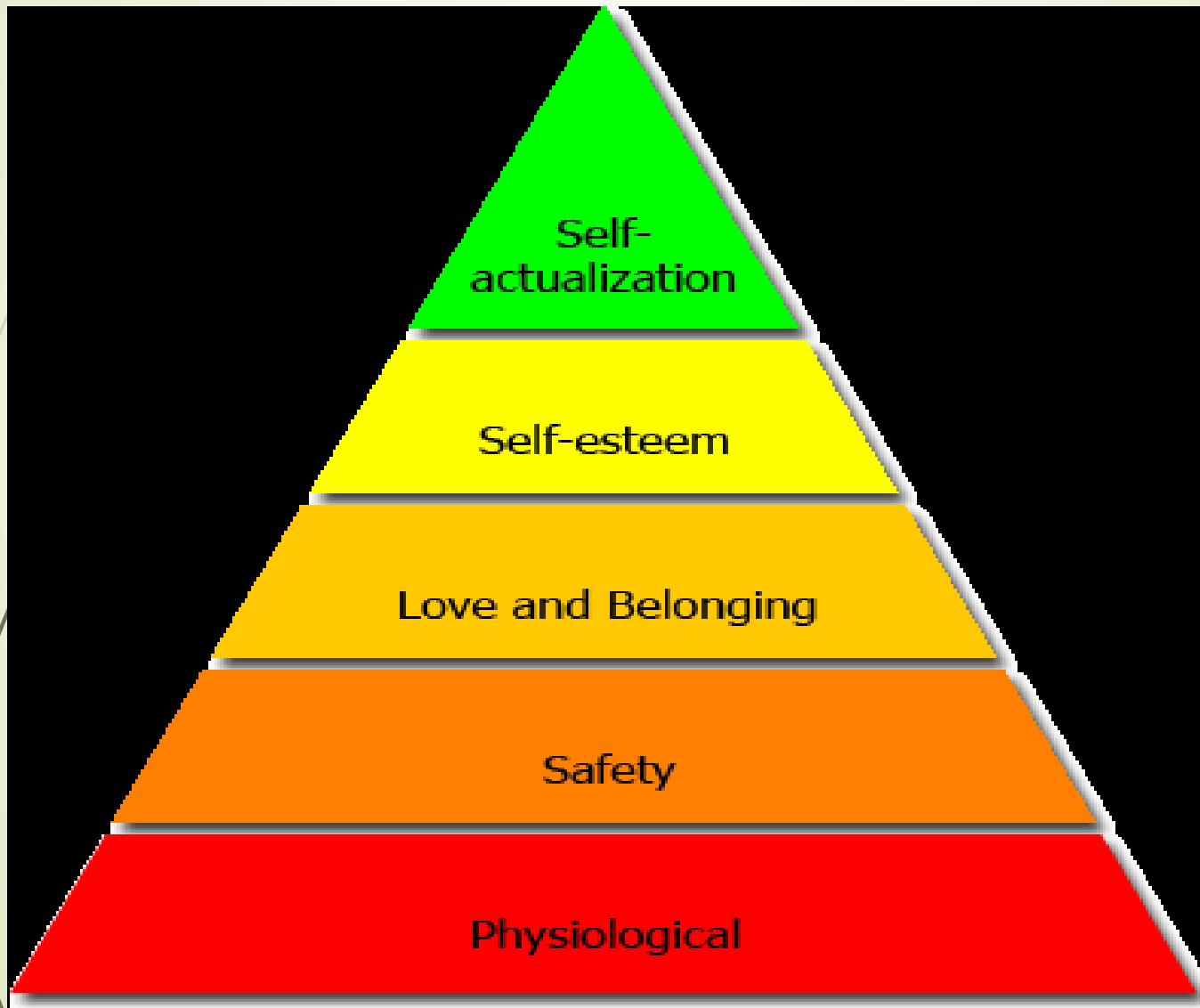
- Thanks
  Chris

Good example:

- **The best way to have written this email is:**
- **Hi all,**

- **Let us meet tomorrow at 11a.m. at Conference room 3 to discuss the product launch event. We will have to decide the keynote speakers and complete the event invite draft tomorrow. Please be there on time.**

- Thanks
  Chris

CONSIDERATION

- **Abraham Lincoln expressed the importance of consideration best:**
- **"Whatever men do, they do in response to motives. Discover the motives that cause their act, and you can make them do your bidding."**

As stated earlier, people who are reading or listening to your message want an answer to the question: "What is in it for me?"

TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION

- Technical communication is the process of conveying technical information through speech, writing, and other media to a specific audience.

- Technical communicators often work collaboratively to create products (deliverables) for various media, including paper, video, and the Internet.

- Deliverables include online help, user manuals, technical manuals, white papers, specifications, process and procedure manuals, industrial videos, reference cards, data sheets, journal articles, patents, training, business papers and technical reports.

Factors to consider in Technical Communication

- **Audience**
- **Purpose**
- **Format**
- **Style**

Format

- • Reports or documents, such as proposals, lab reports, product specifications, or quality-test results.

- • Record-keeping forms, such as service reports, travel and expense forms, or troubleshooting logs.

- • Instructions, such as user guides, online help, and training manuals.

- • Correspondence, such as letters, memos, and e-mails.

- • Presentations, such as interviews, marketing calls, or training seminars.

Preferences of Technical Readers

- sentences that **get straight** to the point.
- words that are **functional, exact and clear.**
- paragraphs that are short, with each paragraph focused on **only one idea**.
- a **visible organization** with headings, bulleted lists, and numbered steps, and graphics and examples that illustrate the details of the subject.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A TECHNICAL DOCUMENT

- **Adheres to *best practice* standards**
- **Content is relevant and accurate**
- **Information is organized logically**
- **Content has a consistent style**
- **Format and layout is easy to scan and read**
- **Uses appropriate graphics and tables to support the text**
- **Uses keywords that enable content to be readily searched**
- **Includes all the information users need or might want to know about the topic**

➡ SAMPLES: SAVED IN PICTURES

(TECH 1,2,3 & TECH OBJECTIVES)

THREE STEPS: (BBA BOOK)

- PLAN
- DRAFT
- REVISE

applicant   application   application form   apply   candidate
curriculum vitae or cv (gb) or resume (us)
employment agencies   interview   job description
job vacancies   references   short-listed

Many people looking for work read the (1) …………………….. advertised in newspapers by companies and (2) ………………… . To reply to an advertisement is to (3) ……………… for a job. (You become a (4) ………………… or an (5) ……………………………). You write an (6) …………………….., or fill in the company's (7) ……………………., and send it, along with your (8) ………………………. and a covering letter. You often have to give the names of two people who are prepared to write (9) …………………….for you. If your qualifications and abilities match the (10) …………………., you might be (11) ……………………., i.e. selected to attend an (12) ………………………. .

Focus on the Audience

1. What does the audience already know about the subject?

TYPES OF AUDIENCE –

- Technical Audience
- Semi-technical Audience
- Non-technical Audience

2. What does the audience want to know?

- Prepare an overview
- Make the objectives clear
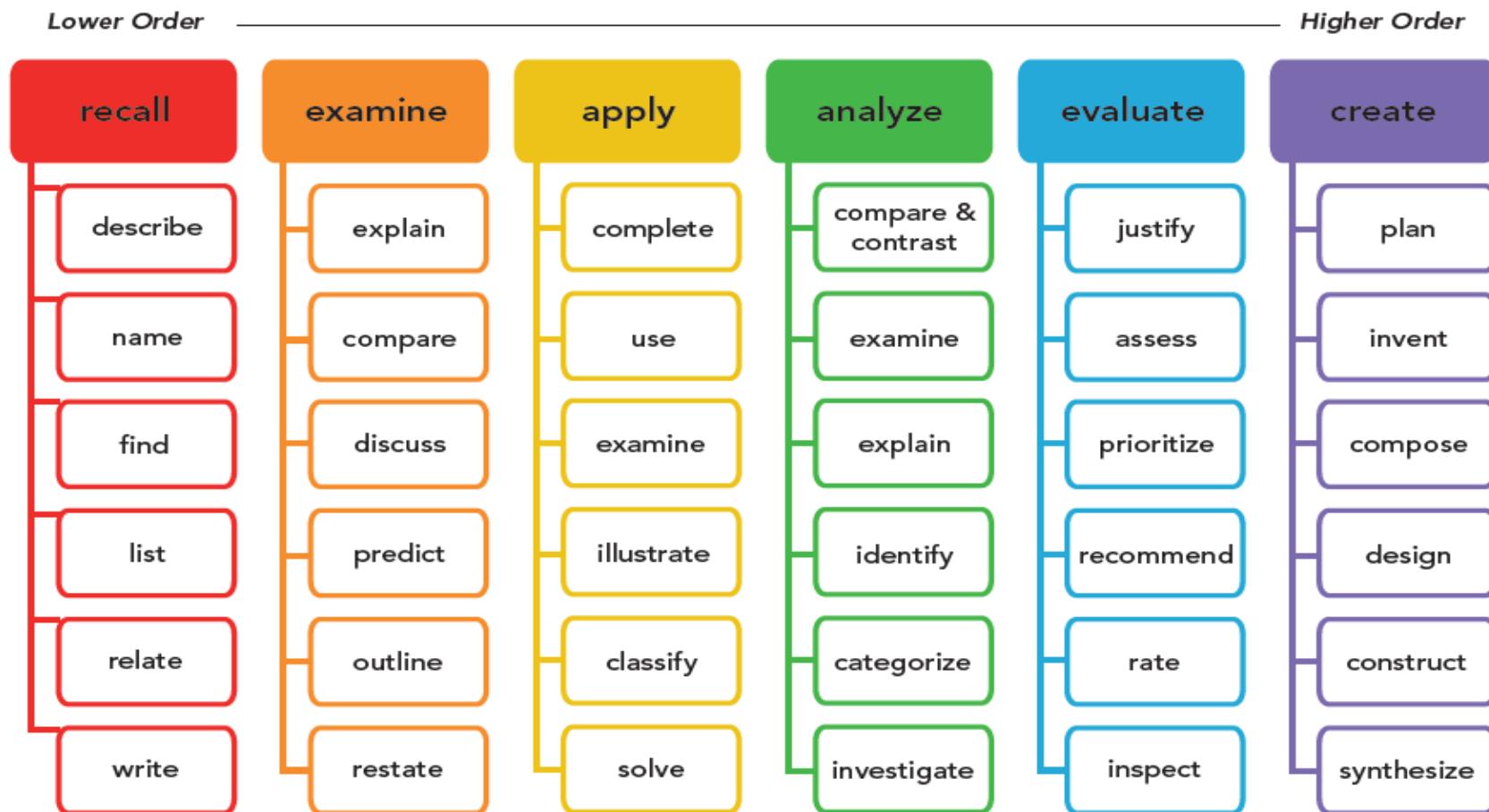- Make the outcomes clear

WORDS TO WRITE YOUR OBJECTIVES & OUTCOMES :

Verbs for Content Objectives

- Analyze
- Apply
- Arrange
- Build a model
- Demonstrate
- Design
- Determine
- Divide
- Combine
- Compute
- Conclude

- Construct
- Convert
- Create
- Decide
- Locate
- Make
- Match
- Order
- Draw
- Draw conclusion
- Find

- Give examples
- Hypothesize
- Identify
- Select
- Separate
- Show
- Show relationship
- Illustrate
- Paint
- Produce
- Put in order

- Rearrange
- Reconstruct
- Reorganize
- Calculate
- Categorize
- Choose best response
- Classify
- Solve
- Support
- Use

WORDS TO WRITE YOUR OBJECTIVES & OUTCOMES :

Generating LOs using *Bloom's Cognitive Taxonomy* (adapted 2019)

Lower Order —————————————————————————— Higher Order

recall	examine	apply	analyze	evaluate	create
describe	explain	complete	compare & contrast	justify	plan
name	compare	use	examine	assess	invent
find	discuss	examine	explain	prioritize	compose
list	predict	illustrate	identify	recommend	design
relate	outline	classify	categorize	rate	construct
write	restate	solve	investigate	inspect	synthesize

Retrieved from http://maasd.edublogs.org/2012/26/linking-ipads-blooms-taxonomy/

WORDS TO WRITE YOUR OBJECTIVES & OUTCOMES :

ACTION VERBS	NON-ACTION VERBS
Define	Understand
Categorize	Learn
Calculate	Appreciate
Critique	Become familiar with
Interpret	Observe
Create	Read
Summarize	Consider
Hypothesize	Demonstrate
Defend	Know

10 Verbs for Meetings

kimgriffithsenglish.com

To invite someone to a meeting - to ask them to come.

To attend - to be there.

To open the meeting - to start.

To read the agenda - to read the plan for the meeting.

To take the minutes - to write down what has happened at the meeting.

To discuss - to talk about.

To offer a suggestion - to tell an idea to help.

To vote - to all give their opinion of yes or no.

To close the meeting - to end the meeting.

To wrap up the meeting - to end the meeting.

- Refer – Meeting Vocabulary – (word document)

3. What does the audience intend to do with the information?

- **Why?**
- **How?**
- **Where?**
- **When?**

- **<u>BEING SENSITIVE TO YOUR AUDIENCE NEEDS:</u>**
<u>Using the "You" Attitude</u>

(refer BBA)

Match these terms with their definitions:

1. business entities

2. set up

3. innovative

4. flopped

5. outsourcing

6. customer centric

7. competitive edge

a. focusing on the customer rather than the product

b. new, original

c. companies

d. something that makes you better than other companies

e. did not succeed, failed

f. structure

g. getting external companies to do work for your company

Effective technical communication requires:

1. Subject competence

2. Linguistic competence, and

3. Organisational competence

Principles for Organizing Technical Information -

- ➠ **Chronological**
- ➠ **Spatial**
- ➠ **General to Specific**
- ➠ **More Important to Less Important**
- ➠ **Comparison and Contrast**
- ➠ **Classification or Partition,**
- ➠ **Problem-Methods-Solution**
- ➠ **Cause and Effect.**

Chronological -

- Present information in chronological order.
- Reverse chronology is also done.

Examples -

- You describe the process used to diagnose the problem with the accounting software.

- In a résumé, you describe your more-recent jobs before your earlier ones.

<u>Spatial</u>.

- Top-to-bottom
- East-to-west
- Inside-to-outside
- Outside-to-inside
- Right to left
- Left to right

Example -

- You describe the three main buildings that will make up the new production facility.

Which one is correct ?

- A) Every one of the shirts has a green collar.
- B) Every one of the shirts have a green collar.

- Correct Answer: A

- Every one of the shirts has a green collar.

- Explanation: The pronoun *one* is singular and requires singular verbs. Do not be misled by the object of the preposition.

Which one is correct ?

- A) This singer, along with a few others, play the harmonica on stage.

- B) This singer, along with a few others, plays the harmonica on stage.

- Correct Answer: B

- This singer, along with a few others, plays the harmonica on stage.

- Explanation: Sometimes the subject is separated from the verb by words such as *along with, as well as, besides, or not*. Ignore these expressions when determining whether to use a singular or plural verb.

Which one is correct ?

▶**A) Sandals and towels are essential gear for a trip to the beach.**

▶**B) Sandals and towels is essential gear for a trip to the beach.**

- Correct Answer: A

- Sandals and towels are essential gear for a trip to the beach.

- Explanation: two subjects connected by *and* require a plural verb.

Which one is correct ?

▶ **A) The president or the vice president are speaking today.**

▶ **B) The president or the vice president is speaking today.**

▶ Correct Answer: B

▶ The president or the vice president is speaking today.

▶ Explanation: two singular subjects connected by *or* require a singular verb.

Which one is correct ?

- **A) Either Cassie or Marie pays the employees this afternoon.**
- **B) Either Cassie or Marie pay the employees this afternoon.**

- Correct Answer: A

- Either Cassie or Marie pays the employees this afternoon.

- Explanation: two singular subjects connected by *or, either/or,* or *neither/nor* require a singular verb.

Which one is correct ?

- A) Either the sculpture or the paintings are in the museum today.

- B) Either the sculpture or the paintings is in the museum today.

- Correct Answer: A

- Either the sculpture or the paintings are in the museum today.

- Explanation: when a singular and plural subject are connected by *or, either/or,* or *neither/nor,* the verb agrees with the subject closer to it.

Which one is correct ?

▶ **A) The coat or the hats are in that closet.**

▶ **B) The coat or the hats is in that closet.**

- Correct Answer: A
- The coat or the hats are in that closet.
- Explanation: when a singular and plural subject are connected by *or, either/or,* or *neither/nor,* the verb agrees with the subject closer to it.

Which one is correct ?

- A) **Neither she nor I is getting the lunch special.**

- B) **Neither she nor I am getting the lunch special.**

- C) **Neither she nor I are getting the lunch special.**

- Correct Answer: B

- Neither she nor I am getting the lunch special.

- Explanation:

- when a singular and plural subject are connected by *or,* *either/or,* or *neither/nor,* the verb agrees with the subject closer to it.

- In this case, the verb must agree with the subject pronoun "I."

Which one is correct ?

➡️ **A) Each of the dancers twirls brilliantly.**

➡️ **B) Each of the dancers twirl brilliantly.**

- Correct Answer: A

- Each of the dancers twirls brilliantly.

- Explanation: The pronoun *each* is singular and requires singular verbs. Do not be misled by the object of the preposition.

Which one is correct ?

➡️**A) Mustard greens are my favorite vegetable.**

➡️**B) Mustard greens is my favorite vegetable.**

- Correct Answer: A

- Mustard greens are my favorite vegetable.

- Explanation: the subject, "Mustard greens," is plural and requires the plural verb "are."

Which one is correct ?

- **A) Everybody at the party was enjoying the food.**

- **B) Everybody at the party were enjoying the food.**

- Correct Answer: A

- Everybody at the party was enjoying the food.

- Explanation: the pronoun *everybody* is singular and requires singular verbs.

General to specific

- You present general information first, then specific information.

- Understanding the big picture helps readers understand the details.

Example -

- ⯈ You explain the major changes and the details of a law mandating the use of a new refrigerant in cooling systems.

More important to less important –

➡ **Discuss the most-important issue first.**

⬇

➡ **Then the next-most-important issue, and so forth.**

➡ **In technical communication, you don't have create suspense.**

Examples -

- When you launch a new product, you discuss market niche, competition, and then pricing.

Subject verb concord -

➡ *He **walks.***

➡ *She **walks.***

➡ *They **walk.***

➡ ***We walk.***

➡ *I **walk.***

➡ ***You walk.***

(growls, growl)

- The **dog** --------- when he is angry.
- The **dogs** --------- when they are angry.

- The **dog** *growls* when he is angry.
- The **dogs** *growl* when they are angry.

- The **dog**, who is chewing on my jeans, ------usually very good. (is / are)

- **Jacob**, who owns sixteen houses, ------ on his way to becoming a billionaire. (is, are)

- The birthday **boy**, along with his friends, ------ anxious for the party to stop. (was, were)

- The **dog**, who is chewing on my jeans, *is* usually very good.

- **Jacob**, who owns sixteen houses, *is* on his way to becoming a billionaire.

- The birthday **boy**, along with his friends, *was* anxious for the party to stop.

The **colors** of the rainbow ------- beautiful. (is / are)

The **colors** of the rainbow *are* beautiful.

(is / are)

- There ------ a **problem** with the balance sheet.

- Here ------ the **papers** you requested.

- There ------ **many paths** to success.

- Here ------ **one road** out of town.

- There *is* a **problem** with the balance sheet.
- Here *are* the **papers** you requested.
- There are **many paths** to success.
- Here *is* **one road** out of town.

Comparison and contrast -

➡ **You choose from one of two patterns:**

(1) discuss all the factors related to one item, **then** all the factors related to the next item, and so forth

(2) discuss **one factor** as it relates to **all** the items, then **another factor** as it relates to **all** the items, and so forth.

Example-

- You are asked to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of three companies bidding on a contract your company is offering.

You can discuss everything about Company 1, then everything about Company 2, and then everything about Company 3.

■ You can discuss the management structure of Company 1, of Company 2, and of Company 3; then you address the engineering expertise of Company 1, of Company 2, and of Company 3; and so forth.

Classification or partition.

- Classification involves placing items into categories according to some criterion. Partition involves breaking a single item or a group of items into major elements.

For classification, you group the motors your company manufactures according to the fuel they burn: gasoline or diesel. For partition, you explain the operation of each major component of one of your motors.

■Singular subject – is (present tense)

- was (past tense)

■Plural subject – are (present tense)

- were (past tense)

■You are / were ……..

■I am / was ……..

Where --------- the pieces of this puzzle? (are, is)

- Where *are* the **pieces** of this puzzle?

The aircraft, with its crew, ------- lost. (was / were)

The **aircraft**, with its crew, *was* lost.

The **cow** and the **pig** -------- jumping over the moon. (were, was)

- The **cow** and the **pig** *were* jumping over the moon.

➥She and her family ----- at Disney World. (is, are)

➡️ **She** and **her family** *are* at Disney World.

- **Red beans** and **rice** ----- my mom's favorite dish.

(was, were)

➤ **Red beans** and **rice** *was* my mom's favorite dish.

Problem-methods-solution -

- ➡ You can use this pattern in discussing the past, the present, or the future. Readers understand this organizational pattern because they use it in their everyday lives.

Example -

- **In describing how your company is responding to a new competitor, you discuss the problem (the recent loss in sales), the methods (how you plan to examine your product line and business practices), and the solution (which changes will help your company prosper).**

<u>Cause and effect</u> -

➡ You can start from causes and speculate about effects, or you can start with the effect and try to determine which factors were the causes of that effect.

Example -

➡️ You discuss factors that you think contributed to a recent sales dip for one of your products. Or you explain how you think changes to an existing product will affect its future sales.

REFER PICTURES FROM PRINCIPLES OF ORGANISATION-

- Chronological
- Spatial
- General to Specific
- More Important to Less Important
- Comparison and Contrast
- Classification or Partition
- Problem-Methods-Solution
- Cause and Effect

No **smoking** or **drinking** ----- allowed. (are / is)

No **smoking** or **drinking** *is* allowed.

- **Every man** and **woman** ------ required to check in. (are / is)

Every man and **woman** *is* required to check in.

▶ **Every boy** and **every girl** ----- given a packet of candies. (was / were)

Every boy and **every girl** *was* given a packet of candies.

Each of the girls ---- qualified for the prize. (is / are)

- **Each of the girls** *is* qualified for the prize.

▶ **Neither** ------ how the competition will end. (know/knows)

Neither knows how the competition will end.

► **Twenty minutes** ----- allotted to each candidate.

(was/were)

▶**Twenty minutes** *was* allotted to each candidate.

- Twenty kilometers ----- a long walk. (is / are)

▶ **Twenty kilometers** *is* a long walk.

Many a man ----- done so. (have/has)

Many a man *has* done so.

► **Everyone of the boys** ------to play football.

(loves / love)

➡️**Everyone of the boys** *loves* to play football.

▶Either **Jessica** or **Christian** ------to blame for the accident. (are / is)

Either **Jessica** or **Christian** *is* to blame for the accident.

> My **sister** or my **brother** ------- meeting you at the airport. (are / is)

My **sister** or my **brother** *is* meeting you at the airport.

▶ Neither **Carla** nor **Jeff** -------
available to meet you at the
airport. (is / are)

- Either **Angie** or **Jeff** *is* meeting at the airport.

Either **he** or **I** ----- wrong. (is / am / are)

► Either **he** or **I** *am* wrong.

- Either **you** or **he** ------- responsible for this accident. (are / is)

Either **you** or **he** *is* responsible for this accident

- Neither **you** nor **he** ------ to do this job. (are / is)
-

Neither **you** nor **he** *is* to do this job.

Neither **my friend** nor **I** ------ going for movie today. (am / are / is)

Neither **my friend** nor **I** *am* going for movie today.

The only time the object of the preposition decides plural or singular verb forms is when noun and pronoun subjects like "some," "half", "none", "more", or "all" are followed by a prepositional phrase. Then the object of the preposition determines the form of the verb.

All of the **chicken** *is* gone.
All of the **chickens** *are* gone.

- **Four** quarts of oil ------ required to get the car running. (was / were)

Four quarts of oil *was* required to get the car running.

Not only **dogs** but also **cats** ------ available at the animal shelter. (are / is)

Not only **dogs** but also **cats** *are* available at the animal shelter.

- Either the bears or the **lion** ------
  escaped from the zoo. (has / have)

Either the bears or the **lion** *has* escaped from the zoo.

Neither the lion nor the **bears** ------- escaped from the zoo. (has / have)

►Neither the lion nor the **bears** *have* escaped from the zoo.

The **athlete** or his **teammates** ------- every day.

(sprints /sprint)

The **athlete** or his **teammates** *sprint* every day.

His **teammates** or the **athlete** ------- every day.

(sprints /sprint)

His **teammates** or the **athlete** sprints every day.

- None of these stories ----- interesting. (is/are)

- None of the boys ------ to take the initiative. (want /wants)

- None of these stories are interesting.
- None of these stories is interesting.

- None of the boys wants to take the initiative.
- None of the boys want to take the initiative.

"None" can take up both singular and plural verbs along with it, depending upon its usage in the sentences.

► **Everybody** ------- to be loved.
(wants / want)

■**Everybody** *wants* to be loved.

➡**Few** -------- left alive after the flood. (was /were)

▶ **Few** *were* left alive after the flood.

➡️**To walk** and **to chew** gum -------
great skill.

(require /requires)

► **To walk** and **to chew** gum *require* great skill**.**

▶**Standing** in the water ----- a bad idea. (is /are)

Standing in the water *is* a bad idea.

■ **Swimming** in the ocean
and **playing** drums ------ my hobbies.
(are /is)

Swimming in the ocean and **playing** drums *are* my hobbies.

- The **herd** *is* stampeding.
- The **Committee** *is* very keen in solving this issue.
- The **Committee** *are* divided on a particular point.

A collective noun, such as "team" or "staff", can be either singular or plural depending upon the rest of the sentence. Typically, they take the singular form, as the collective noun is treated as a cohesive single unit.

The Burbs ------ a movie starring Tom Hanks.

(is /are)

➡ **The Burbs** *is* a movie starring Tom Hanks.

Titles of books, movies, novels, and other similar works are treated as singular and take a singular verb.

▶ **The United States** *is* a well developed country.

When the plural noun is a proper name for some single object or some collective unit, it must be followed by a singular verb.

■The **news** ------- read by Geetha.

■**Mathematics** --------- a branch of study.

(is /are)

➥ The **news** *is* read by Geetha.

➥ **Mathematics** *is* a branch of study.

Mary doesn't ------- for pizza. **(care /cares)**

Mary doesn't *care* for pizza.

They don't -------- the way home. (know /knows)

They don't *know* the way home.

- Great **pains** *have* been taken to solve this problem.
- Much **pains** *has* been taken to solve this problem.
- All possible **means** *are* being tried out to solve this problem.
- The **means** employed to solve this problem *is* not appropriate.

("Pains" and "means" take either the singular or the plural verb, but the construction must be consistent.)

His **means** ----- not sufficient to run a family.

(are /is)

His **means** *are* not sufficient to run a family.

When the word "means" is used to indicate one's income, it takes a plural verb.

- Refer – organisational principles – pdf & ppts

BASICS OF TECHNICAL WRITING

Compound nouns -

- Are words for people, animals, places, things, or ideas, made up of two or more words.

- Most compound nouns contain at least one noun.

- Are made with nouns that have been modified by adjectives, prepositions, verbs, or other nouns.

- Eg.
- First part: type or purpose - Police
- Second part: what or who - man
- Compound noun - policeman

There are three forms for compound nouns:

1. open or spaced - space between words (tennis shoe)

2. hyphenated - hyphen between words (six-pack)

3. closed or solid - no space or hyphen between words (bedroom)

- bus stop
- fire-fly
- Football
- full moon
- Blackboard
- Software
- Breakfast
- washing machine
- swimming pool
- Sunrise
- Haircut
- train-spotting

- check-out
- mother-in-law
- Underworld
- truckful

singular	plural
a tennis shoe	three **tennis shoes**
one assistant headmaster	five **assistant headmasters**
the sergeant major	some **sergeants major**
a mother-in-law	two **mothers-in-law**
an assistant secretary of state	three **assistant secretaries of state**
my toothbrush	our **toothbrushes**
a woman-doctor	four **women-doctors**
a doctor of philosophy	two **doctors of philosophy**
a passerby, a passer-by	two **passersby**, two **passers-by**

	old style plural (very formal)	new style plural
teaspoonful	3 **teaspoonsful** of sugar	3 **teaspoonfuls** of sugar
truckful	5 **trucksful** of sand	5 **truckfuls** of sand
bucketful	2 **bucketsful** of water	2 **bucketfuls** of water
cupful	4 **cupsful** of rice	4 **cupfuls** of rice

SOME MORE PLURALS -

- higher-ups
- also-rans
- go-betweens
- has-beens
- good-for-nothings
- grown-ups

long plural form becomes →	plural compound noun [noun + noun]
100 trees with apples	100 **apple trees**
1,000 cables for telephones	1,000 **telephone cables**
20 boxes for tools	20 **tool boxes**
10 stops for buses	10 bus stops
4,000 wheels for cars	4,000 **car wheels**

NOMINAL COMPOUNDS

- **Watchdog** – A dog which watches

- **Rocking-chair** – A chair that rocks

- **Glass painting** – A painting which is done on glass

- **Runway** – A way which is used for taking off/landing of the flights

- **Dining-room** – A room used for dining

- **Flashlight** – A light which flashes

- Air supply – supply of air

- Animal behaviour – the behaviour of an animal

- Arithmetic unit – a unit in which arithmetic is performed

- Ball pen – a pen with a tiny ball as its writing point

- Battery car – a car which works on battery

- Battery valve – a valve of a battery

- Blast furnace – furnace of the type which works by blast of preheated air

- Butterfly valve – a valve which is in the shape of a butterfly

- Butt weld – weld of the type called "butt"

- Calculation speed – a speed with which calculations are done

- Calculator memory – memory of a calculator
- Cable television – television signals which is transmitted through cables
- Carbon dioxide – dioxide of carbon
- Cassette tape – a tape of a cassette
- Coal gas – gas obtained from coal

- Colour television – a television which displays pictures in colour

- Communication satellite – a satellite used for communication

- Computer technology – technology used in computers

- Concrete structure – a structure of concrete

- Condenser extractor pump – a pump for extracting from condenser

- Control centre- a centre which controls
- Control tower – a tower that controls
- Cooling tower – a tower that cools
- Copper wire – wire that made of copper
- Cylinder head design- design of the head of a cylinder

- Data input – input of data
- Diesel engine- an engine that runs on diesel
- Dish antenna- antenna in the shape of a dish
- Disk drive – a drive of a disc
- Energy source – source of energy

- Fire fly – fly that emits flickering light
- Friction losses – losses caused by friction
- Gas jar – a jar containing gas
- Gear mechanism – mechanism for operating the gear
- Grease gun – a gun used for ejecting grease

- Heat transfer – transfer of heat
- Heat treatment – treatment with heat
- Hot water – water which is hot
- Item code – the code number of an item
- Jet engine- an engine propelled by jet
- Keyboard – a board which is having keys for operation
- Laser printer – a printer that uses laser technology
- Letter press – method of printing using raised types
- Log tables – tables in which ready arithmetic data are available
- Lock nut – a nut that resists loosening under vibration

- Machine language- the language which is used for operating a machine

- Machine tools- tools for cutting or shaping materials

- Mains electricity – electricity which comes from the mains

- Mass production – production in mass

- Media support – support by media

- Mercury thermometer – a thermometer which has mercury

- Metal tubes- tubes made of metal

- Mild steel – Steel that is mild in nature

- Nickel alloy- alloy containing nickel

- Noise pollution – pollution caused by noise

- Pedal power – power derived from a pedal device
- Personal computer – a computer used for personal purposes
- Picture tube – a tube of a television designed for the reproduction of pictures
- Power cable – a cable conducting power
- Power source – source of power
- Radio waves- waves with electro-magnetic frequency
- Research laboratory – a laboratory for research
- Rice husk – husk from rice

- Road engine – an engine that runs on the road
- Roller mill – mill for rolling
- Silver extraction – extraction of silver
- Soil laboratory – a laboratory for testing soil
- Solar cooker –a cooker using solar energy
- Space travel – travel to space
- Spark plug – plug that emits spark

- Steel bar – a bar made of steel
- Stop valve – a valve made to stop the passage
- Temperature drop – drop in temperature
- Turret lathe – a lathe having a turret
- Underground cable – a cable that is laid underground

- Video screen – the screen on which video is displayed
- Water heater – a heater used to heat water
- Water tube – a tube containing water
- Aircraft pilot- pilot operating the aircraft
- Camera platform - a platform for a camera
- Circuit diagram - diagram representing the circuit
- Radar scan - a scan performed by radar
- Computer fuel testing - testing the fuel using the computer

ACTIVE & PASSIVE VOICE

When do I use passive voice?

1. The DOER is unknown:

- The cave paintings of Lascaux were made in the Upper Old Stone Age.
- [We don't know who made them.]

The DOER is irrelevant:

- An experimental solar power plant will be built in the Australian desert.
- [We are not interested in who is building it.]

You want to be vague about who is responsible:

▶ Mistakes were made.

▶ [Common in bureaucratic writing!]

You are talking about a general truth:

- Rules are made to be broken.
- [By whomever, whenever.]

You want to emphasize the person or thing acted on. For example, it may be your main topic:

- Insulin was first discovered in 1921 by researchers at the University of Toronto. It is still the only treatment available for diabetes.

Passive voice is often preferred in lab reports and scientific research papers, most notably in the Materials and Methods section:

- The sodium hydroxide was dissolved in water. This solution was then titrated with hydrochloric acid.

When should I avoid passive voice?

Both Othello and Iago desire Desdemona. She is courted.

[Who courts Desdemona? Othello? Iago? Both of them?]

Research has been done to discredit this theory.

[Who did the research? You? Your professor? Another author?]

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